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STUDIES IN ARCADY

To

MAUDE EGERTON KING

STUDIES IN ART

AND OTHER ESSAYS FROM A COUNTRY PARSONAGE

Second Series

BY

R. L. GALES

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LONDON

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I

STUDIES IN ARCADY

THE BRAVE FIGHT OF THE COTTAGE WOMAN

ASMODEUS, as we all know, carried the student through the air, and showed him the strange things that passed beneath the roofs of Madrid. It is greatly to be wished that some good, pitying, understanding angel would perform a similar service for those many kind souls who sincerely wish to help the women of village England, but whose efforts are rendered vain by the fact that they have so little real knowledge of the true conditions of their life. An aërial journey over the cottage homes of England would provide much of interest; would show pathetic and humorous scenes, bringing out a variety of character and temperament, but on the whole would reveal one uniform spectacle, that of a great army of gallant

fighters waging, with varying degrees of courage and cheerfulness, a long, unceasing battle.

The life of the cottage woman is for the most part one of incredible monotony. This monotony, of course, is varied where women work in the fields, as they do in many parts of England. But this practice, never perhaps very desirable, is in many cases impossible. Take the case of the mother of a large family of young children. Day after day, week after week, she is confined to the house. The man goes to work, the children over five go to school. She is alone in the cottage all day, with perhaps two crying babies. It must be remembered that the great outside world does not exist for her. It is one great good of the public-house that in it the men talk of public things. But the 'res publica' is no concern of the cottage woman. Again, at least in many parts of England, the want of neighbourliness is something inconceivable. I remember, for instance, a row of three small cottages, divided from two larger ones by a tiny ditch with a plank

across it. The plank had not even a hand-rail, and did not require one. Some calamity had befallen No. 3 of the smaller cottages. 'How is Mrs. Bates getting on in her trouble?' it was asked of Mrs. Spilsby, the good lady of No. 1 of the two slightly larger houses on the other side of the plank. 'I don't know, I'm sure.' 'Haven't you seen her to-day?' 'Oh! we never speak to anybody on the other side of the bridge.' This is not so much churlishness as self-defence, a protection against the quarrelling which so often follows any degree of intimacy, as it must almost inevitably do in those tiny spaces, where everything is overlooked, and every word is overheard. Life in a row of cottages is like a card-party, in which with the best intentions it is impossible to avoid seeing your neighbours' hands. A quarrel once set on foot, as they know by old experience, is apt to become a long-protracted vendetta. 'The only way to live in peace is to keep yourself to yourself, and say nothing to none of 'em,' you will often hear. So the good woman is alone all day at her

work, washing, scrubbing, mending. Perhaps she is cutting out a tiny pair of trousers for Bobby, or making a frock for Nellie. She is scheming all the time as to how the week's meagre earnings are to be laid out to the best advantage when she gets to market on Saturday; if it will be possible, for instance, to bring home a new pair of shoes for one of the children, whose feet are on the ground. You will hear her singing at her work, when the babies are quiet, generally a hymn. 'Angels of Jesus' is a great favourite. It recalls the summer Sunday evenings, when she used to walk to church with Tom. Church has long been a thing of the past for her; yet she wishes her children to go, and has a certain vague loyalty to it. 'I never gets to church now,' you will hear, 'but I often thinks about the old place.' 'The old place' is the place of her wedding, the place of her sacred graves. One has known cottage women who solaced the solitary hours by the recital of their own compositions. But these are the exercises of the seasons of calm weather. Too often there are dark, unhappy days, spent in

brooding over her own bitternesses, the spitefulness of a neighbour, the unkindness and ingratitude of some old friend. The slow hours wear away, as of some toil-worn Mariana in the moated grange, and then, be the day weary or be the day long, at length it ringeth to evensong. The time of cheerfulness comes when the children come home from school, and an hour later, when the man comes home from work. Too often the children bring the recital of fresh troubles, but at any rate they all share their evening meal, the man and his wife, and their boys and girls. It is often savoury enough to the nostrils of the passers-by: a dish of stewed-up meat and vegetables, or bloaters, or fried bacon. At any rate, now the cottage wife has someone to talk to. Now is the time for her to unload her cargo of troubles, *vider son sac*, as the French say. All sorts of queer little things touch people with narrow lives. One remembers a man, whose pride was in his garden, coming home to find that one of the children had chopped off the first treasured bud of a white rose with a switch. 'I've

had very bad news again to-night,' he said ruefully, as he looked at the ruined flower. All these things are passed in review. 'I sorts my bumpkins around, and gets 'em their suppers and gets 'em to bed,' the house-mother will say.

In the complete absence of wider interests, the good cottage mother concentrates on her children. This absorbing devotion often manifests itself in very unwise forms, and is one fruitful cause of the quarrels mentioned above, so common in all villages. On their way back from school, the children of two families will fall out and chide and fight, and sometimes repeat their respective elders' criticisms of one another. Mrs. Brown's little girl has told tales of Mrs. Jones' little boy, and the latter has been punished; the battles of the children are mere rehearsals of the conflict afterwards waged by the mothers. The man often comes home from work to find a perfect tornado raging in his house. The children 'fall out and fall in again,' but the feud of the mothers only increases with the lapse of time.

The mention of the feuds which fill so large a place in the lives of so many cottage women, recalls to my own memory one of which I was the unwitting cause, and at which, to my great discomfort, I daily assisted for a period extending over many months. The protagonists were two widely contrasted types of cottage women: the one, a woman of the kind described above, whom unkind critics might call a muddler, a poor thing, always ready to break down, to give way, but yet a mother, devoted to her children, indeed, doting on them blindly; the other far more decisive, resolute, resourceful, a woman of far greater natural ability, yet alike in this, that both were fighters, as indeed every cottage woman has to be. Both fought the same good fight, the latter, however, using the weapons of irony, rather than the more usual ones of hysteria. I myself have, at different times, crossed swords with both these adversaries. With one of them, at least, I afterwards concluded an honourable and lasting peace. I here salute them both.

The circumstances of the fight were as follows: I occupied half of what may perhaps be called a small farmhouse, a labourer and his family living in the other half. My housekeeper conducted her ministrations from a cottage on the other side of the road. Difficulties having arisen with her, her office was taken over by the woman in the house. This arrangement went on for three or four years, when it came to an end in this way. I was able to perform a service for the original housekeeper, for which she and all her family were very grateful. This roused into flame in the mind of the actual housekeeper the suspicion which is always slumbering in the breasts of the country poor. She hastily concluded that a plot was being hatched to depose her, and re-instate the original housekeeper, and, acting on this supposition, gave notice. In all simplicity I accepted this notice, and asked the original housekeeper to undertake the post, which she did with alacrity.

The situation thus rashly entered upon was soon seen to be one of extreme difficulty.

The deposed potentate, remaining still under the same roof, had to endure the sight of her hated rival performing her own late functions, marching four times a day across the road, with firm and resolute step, bearing the trays of breakfast and lunch, tea and dinner. In hysteria and in tears she had to hear the loud enquiry, 'Do you prefer onion sauce or bread sauce with your roast mutton?'—the terms of ceremonious politeness with which I was addressed (it had not been ever thus), and the long impressive disquisitions on the smallest details of the domestic arrangements. The opposition was kept in some sort of bounds by the fact that it was extremely important for it to remain in the cottage. Thus, hidden in the tabernacle from the strife of tongues, I often heard it proceeding briskly in the morning. 'I'll go through fire and water for my children,' would come in weak, hysterical accents. 'I'll go through hell for mine,' would come the calm, unperturbed reply. The language of both disputants was equally forcible, but while the tone of one was filled with a blind, foolish

fury, that of the other was marked (for the most part) by a calm self-possession, as of a grave elder loyally observing the rules of a game he condescends to play with a child. She carried on the conflict with great patience and gallantry for about six months, and in the end was completely victorious.

Life had been one long struggle for her, and this no doubt had developed her power of self-defence, and strengthened her natural love of combat. It was impossible to get much 'change' out of her, in things great or small. The cottage was on one occasion visited by an old lady, accompanied by a dachshund, and a little girl, named respectively 'Skipper' and 'Letty.' The old lady, resenting what appeared to her an undue familiarity, hinted that the child should be called 'Miss Letty.' The reproof was accepted with apparent meekness, but on the housekeeper's next appearance, she remarked in bland tones 'I've given Master Skipper his supper.' Her irony, indeed, was delightful; she possessed, like the late Father Tyrell, *une âme pascalienne et gasconne.*

It was a never-failing source of amusement to listen to her tarasconades. A varied and adventurous career had given many opportunities for the development of her great powers of observation, In talking to her one could not but be struck by her extraordinary quickness of perception. Just as a steersman feels every little wind under the blue sky, and trims the sails of his boat to catch it, so she was sensitive to every shade of feeling or opinion in her interlocutor's manner, and at once turned her discourse in that direction. For instance, she was once railing against the Roman Church with great acerbity, and immediately perceiving something perfunctory and lukewarm in the manner with which her harangue was received, at once went on, 'Not that I've anything to say against Catholics. Dear me, I've often stayed at Arundel with the Mercers. One of the Mercers even carries the incense before the priest.' In the same way she was quick to retrieve any false step she made in the course of her tirades. She was one day inveighing against

the enormity of servants reading their employers' private letters and diaries, saying that it was a shameful thing that the secrets contained therein should thus be meanly stolen and divulged. 'I remember myself,' she added, 'reading in Lady Maud's diary "the Captain kissed me three times." Of course,' she went on, immediately recovering herself, 'I only refer to a few sheets she'd torn out and thrown into the waste-paper basket.'

I confess that I look back with admiration on the alert, resourceful mind, the keen interest in life, the resolute determination to make the best of things and not to be worsted in any encounter, the sportsmanlike love of a fight, and not least the unflinching courage with which she met the dark hour and the appearance of the direful faces.

She was by no means representative of her class, except in this, that for her life was a fight. A fight it is for them, for weak-minded, or for strong, from first to last. A fight with poverty, a fight often with illness, a brave fight to keep the wolf from the door.

Life is for them one monotonous round of work, diversified from time to time by scenes of active conflict, cheered from time to time by a little pleasuring, if it is only the weekly marketing on Saturday night, the interest of bringing home a pair of shoes for one of the children, or a toy for the baby, or something for the house, a new saucepan, or a cheap American clock, the drinking a little beer with the men, a little laughter and chatter and recalling of sweet-hearting days, and the old jokes and rivalries. There is beneath it all the life of the heart, the woman's tenderness, the loyalty to the man who has loved and desired her. Above all, there are her children, for most cottage mothers, especially her boys. 'How is Bessie getting on?' it was asked in a Surrey village of one of the most excellent of her class, the best of mothers, about a young daughter in service at Manchester. 'Oh! Bess,' was the reply, 'she's all right—I don't seem to take no interest in she. It's my sailor I'm thinkin' about.'

Perhaps some lady may read these lines

who is anxious to teach and help her cottage sisters. I frankly confess that I am very heterodox as to the value of many of the efforts for the benefit of the poor made by upper class philanthropists. My own counsel would be 'Do not try to teach them anything at all.' They are taught and drilled and lectured as it is *ad nauseam*. Often the attempt is made, with the most praiseworthy motives, to force upon them upper-class ways of doing things, as in such matters as the use of baths and improved methods of cooking. One would not disparage efforts so well meant, and, one must admit, often apparently so much needed. But after all, it is possible that in these matters the poor know their own business best, what is practicable, and really suitable for them. For instance, they laugh at the better class fear of infection, and very often, as a matter of fact, go scathless through dangers of this kind, in which their betters would die like flies. But the heart faints in the long hot day. The cottage woman needs the cordial of human kindness, the oil and wine of true sympathy and understanding.

One has known the visit of a lady coming unexpectedly in the lonely afternoon act like magic on some discouraged and dejected fighter. There must be no touch of patronage, no suspicion of lecturing. They have no envy of their 'betters'—let the young girl tell them of her balls and parties, her visits to London; this will give the most real pleasure. If perhaps an older lady, who has suffered some great loss, can contrive to say something of her trouble, and can show that she is helped and comforted by the sympathy that will be so freely given, she will have done the best thing of all. The cottage woman admits the difference between the lady and herself, but she likes to be made to feel that, in spite of these differences, a substantial human equality subsists between them. It is very difficult to do this, but it is one of the things best worth doing.

THE LADY VISITOR

THERE are phrases of certain writers, say, Mrs. Ewing or Miss Yonge, there are lines of certain poets, for instance, Tennyson and, above all, Keble, which with wonderful subtlety call up the whole Anglican atmosphere (if one may use the term without offence), or perhaps it would be better to say the atmosphere of the English village, the dignified and ordered peace of old-fashioned Hall and Rectory. Such are the lines from the poem in the 'Christian Year' for the 'Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity':—

Red o'er the forest falls the setting sun,
The line of yellow light dies fast away
That crown'd the eastern copse; and chill and dun
Falls on the moor the brief November day.

This is the sunset of a day in which the Squire has been after the pheasants, and the

gentle lady who presides at the tea table has filled the afternoon with a round of visits to the cottages in which she is an honoured and welcome guest. The life of the old-fashioned Squire and Parson and their wives and daughters was set in the scenery of the 'Christian Year' as in a fitting frame.

There are ladies whose 'poor people' are their hobby, the chief disinterested pleasure of their lives. We do not mean professional philanthropists, reformers, or propagandists of any kind, but those who delight in sympathetic intercourse with the fellow-creatures, not only of their own class, among whom their lot is cast, and whom fortune has favoured with the necessary opportunities and gifts for following this pursuit. This would seem to be *par excellence* the hobby and interest of the truly large and humane mind. Many ladies of a bygone generation now despised, who knew nothing of Suffragist agitations, hockey, golf, bridge, motoring, or the other thousand and one interests, activities, and sports of the modern woman, whose interests, after their personal ones, were in

their 'poor people,' had probably larger and wider minds than many of the most advanced women of the present day.

Over the tea table such a lady as I think of tells of the village happenings, the village humours, the away-goings and home-comings, the news of the girl in service, the boy at sea. What a feast of gossip, healthy, human, kindly, you may have at such a lady's luncheon table—the banns that have been called in church, the absentees from one pew, the visitors in another, the answers of the boys in Sunday school, the pranks of the choir, the cantankerousness of the blacksmith. The village panorama passes before one. 'My wife is not a clever woman,' a dear old Colonel of the writer's acquaintance used to say. 'Not a modern woman,' he might have said more truly; 'not an advanced woman,' more truly still, one who would have been more in harmony with her surroundings if her lot had been cast in England of fifty years ago, but one whose tact and sympathy and human feeling made her at home with the poor.

I should like to insist upon my belief that what village people need is not so much instruction, reproof, correction, lectures on cooking, and the management of children, as a little human pleasure, a little interest and colour in their lives. The weightier matters may, perhaps, come in incidentally. Speaking of intercourse between men and women, Michelet says:—'Men have learned everything in talking with these amiable doctors who know nothing.' This brief flash of genius lights up the whole conservative side of the present debate on the Woman Question. Mr. Chesterton in a recent book argues that as woman becomes a specialist she loses her universal position. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the poor may learn much from the amiable doctor, the gentle, sympathetic lady who at any rate sets out to teach them nothing, who is interested in them as human beings, as friends, in spite of social differences and distinctions. Nothing gives the cottage woman so much pleasure as the visit of a lady, that is, if the visitor is frankly sympathetic and human. She should

not confine herself to the concerns of the cottage woman, condolences with her ailments, inquiries after her husband, advice as to her children, but should talk of her own children, nephews and nieces, as the case may be, should tell of her visiting plans and travels. There should be intercourse, not exhortation from a pedestal or pulpit. Nothing gives a poor woman greater pleasure than for a lady to come and talk to her as one human being to another. It opens a window on wider scenes than those she looks on every day. How much it is valued is shown by the continual complaints one hears in different places as to the clergy and their women folk not visiting. 'Oh! miss,' said a woman in aggrieved tones the other day to a lady who had been through a slight operation, 'the first I heard about your operation was in the village.' The poor are very much 'set up' if they learn that any of their betters are suffering from the same illness, or have undergone the same operation they suffer from or have undergone themselves. This consolation should never be withheld them.

One could write much on the theme of how great is the need of the country poor, especially the women, of a little pleasure, a little colour, a little break in the monotony of their days. I remember the case of a toil-worn mother of many babies, who had not been outside her door for months together, who confided to me the day dream that had haunted her all the summer through. 'I often thinks how nice it 'ud be if me and Tom and the children could go up on the Hog's Back some fine Sunday. We'd put the two babies in the pram, and take some sandwiches, and start off after breakfast. We'd just sit in the grass and see the motors go past, and come home in the evening about six o'clock. I know we shan't never do it, but I often thinks how nice it would be.' As she expatiated on the details of this scheme, which as things were had about as much chance of being realized as if the proposal had been a month's holiday in Switzerland, she fairly gurgled with pleasure. Indeed, she was more excited by this purely imaginary holiday of a few hours in a spot a mile and a

half away than probably either the writer or reader of these lines would be by the prospect of crossing the Brenner or the Splügen into Italy.

Perhaps some reader may object that by actual experience she does not find that her visits give her this pleasure. In visiting the poor, as in every other interest and pursuit, it is of course true that 'we receive but what we give.' The lady visitor must herself take pleasure in her visits. Tact and sympathy, and common-sense, of course, are needed, and a wide-minded way of looking at things. But no one should be discouraged by apparent failure, especially at first. Many of the poor are wrapped in suspicion and a dense, impenetrable reserve. They will sit in their chairs and answer in monosyllables to every conceivable remark with a sphinx-like expression on their faces. One sees them *per speculum in ænigmate*, and never gets face to face with them at all. This is no doubt the armour of self-defence against possibilities of many kinds. They have sometimes a suspicion that what they say will be after-

wards laughed at, even, perhaps, a dim inkling that 'copy' may be made of their remarks. I remember a curate who was in the habit of retailing the conversation of the poor at the Rectory table, and was afterwards literally driven from a cottage by an infuriated old man. 'Go away, I don't want ye. You don't want to do no good to people —you only wants to hear what they says, and laugh at 'em afterwards.' Still sadder was the case of a lady in a remote parish who contributed a harmless series of 'Village Sketches' to the *Church Times*. She became aware, shortly afterwards, of a universal coldness which she could not understand, but the reason of which was revealed to her by an exclamation she caught as she passed down the village street:—'There goes that girt big liar.' Such things, if done at all, should be hidden discreetly in half-crown monthly or sixpenny weekly reviews. Again, it is not wise to ask too many questions. 'She came poking her nose into everything,' you will sometimes hear, 'trying to find out all she could, and went away and never give

me nothing.' This is the kind of response one sometimes gets to a series of inquiries made with the kindest intention as to the welfare of every single member of the family. These are the discouragements of the visitor. The question of giving we will not here touch on. One lady visitor I have heard of, new to her business, inquired of an old woman what it was she was really expected to do. 'Well, miss,' was the reply, 'first you axes after my rheumatiz, and then you reads me a small portion of the Scriptures, and then you gives me a shillin'.'

But visiting of this directly improving character is hardly what is contemplated in the present paper. As in everything else in life, in visiting the poor nothing happens as it is expected to do. This is especially the case with the way small gifts of various kinds are received. You read in the 'Monthly Packet' of the refreshment given to a fever-parched boy by 'a few sharp-tasting red currants,' and proceed to take your special invalid a basket of fragrant William pears. 'I've just had my tea,' you will perhaps be

told, 'and at the best o' times I'm no great eater o' fruit.' Conventional expressions of gratitude for small gifts of food and clothing are not always forthcoming. 'You wears your clothes very hard, miss,' said a cottage woman to a lady who had brought her a parcel of cast-off clothing. It is impossible to tell how books, pictures, and the like will be received. It is not very relevant, but I cannot forbear telling a story told me by a clerical friend in the country. He went one Holy Week to see a bedridden old man of eighty, and took with him a small book of sacred pictures. The old man examined them with great interest. In one of them the devil was seen escaping from the corner of the picture. 'Ah!' said the old man, 'I know that old gentleman very well—he oft tempts I in the night.'

But what the poor need most of all is a living human interest and sympathy, the sight of a larger and fairer life than their own, yet in touch with their own, and this it is the peculiar opportunity of many ladies in quiet country places to be able to give. The

deeper things, perhaps, should not be obtruded, but they should be always there. In the intercourse with the poor which is best and most fruitful there is a background, an atmosphere, a consciousness of something which frames and encloses the passing sights, the things which come and go, as the enamelled scenes of the Passion encircle the mirror in Jan Arnolfini's house at Bruges.

THE COUNTRY PARSON AND THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

In the village adjoining the one in which I write, a new Church School was opened in 1902. It was built at a cost of eighteen hundred pounds, every penny of which has been paid, the whole being subscribed by Church people for the express purpose of securing Church of England teaching to the children of the village. To make things safer, a trust deed was drawn up and a new site near the old one was purchased. It will be rightly asked, Is the school so provided for their children acceptable to the people of the village? The answer to this question is simple. The excellence of the secular instruction in this school is a proverb locally, and there is no murmur of dissatisfaction against the religious teaching given. There

is not a single child withdrawn from that teaching. The people take the greatest pride in 'our school.' One has only to go to one of the Christmas entertainments to see how well the children are taught, and that going to school is a pleasure to them. It is true that in this particular parish there is little or no dissent. The people, no doubt, as in other places, are many of them hazy, many altogether indifferent, on religious matters, but they, one and all, if asked whether they wished their school to be handed over to the County Council, and undenominationalism to be installed in the place of the Catechism, would reply, 'I don't know what undenominationalism is, but I wish my children to be taught the Catechism, and I wish our school to go on as it is at present.'

I do not say that in all villages the schools are so excellent, and the people so satisfied as in this particular instance, but of one thing, twenty years of life in remote country villages has convinced me, and that is that the grievance of country people in having only a

Church school to send their children to, which looms so large in Nonconformist sermons and Radical newspapers, has practically no existence in real life at all. No efforts have indeed been spared to convince country Nonconformists of the enormity of a grievance they had not hitherto suspected. In twenty years' experience I have never known a child in a Church school withdrawn from the religious instruction. If a scrupulous clergyman suggests such a thing, the reply he will most likely get is, 'I don't see why he should be treated any different to the rest.' On one occasion I myself made the suggestion to some parents who were Baptists, that as their children had not yet been baptised, they might prefer that they should not learn the Catechism. 'They can't learn too much that's good,' was the response. In the case I am thinking of the venerable Rector agreed with the parents. 'I know the Pursers are unbaptised,' he told me, 'but the family are not unbelievers. They defer the administration of the initial Sacrament.' As in the old-fashioned theory of thrashing boys

periodically whatever their behaviour at the moment, if the Pursers did not need the Catechism at that time, they were to learn it 'against they do.' If the children had been excluded from the Catechism lesson I have no doubt deep offence would have been given. Quiet readers of their morning paper would have been startled by the head-lines, 'Priestly Exclusiveness: Excommunication of Little Dissenters.' Seriously I have never known a villager who ever imagined he had a grievance in having only a Church of England school to send his children to.

The idea that this is due to clerical intimidation is grotesquely ridiculous to any one who knows anything of village life as it really is. Villagers have no hesitation in speaking their mind on any subject, least of all perhaps on the subject of the schools. It is with many a very real grievance that they have to send the children at all; with most that they cannot keep them at home when their help is needed. I have been myself abused before now on this head, and have found great difficulty in convincing an excited

woman that I was not responsible for the hardship. On my telling her that it was the law, she exclaimed scathingly, 'The laws in England did ought to be more practick.' So one does not fail to hear some very plain speaking if the children don't 'get on' at school as they should, if the master is suspected of favouritism, if the big ones are rough and 'put upon' the little ones as they go to school and come home again, very often if they are caned, 'kept in,' or, indeed, punished in any way. I remember a hub-bub that went on for months about a boy receiving one stroke of the cane for fighting, whereupon his sister had exclaimed, *coram populo*, that the schoolmaster was 'an old beast;' for this expression of opinion she was stood on the form. 'Hounding my children,' said the excited mother. 'Do *you* think it was anything so out of the way,' she inquired of me in wonder and amazement, 'if she did call him "an old beast"?' Occasionally I have even heard complaints from parents who liked their children kept in order that they were not sufficiently chastised. 'I sends

my children to be learned,' said one Spartan, mother, 'and I sends 'em to be thrashed.' But amid all the varied and many complaints that I remember, I have never once heard a complaint that the children had been taught that they were regenerated in Baptism, or that the Eucharist is a Sacrifice.

Neither do I ever remember a case of the priestly tyranny, the clerical injustice and oppression, the persecution of little Dissenters and their parents, of which we hear so much in the newspapers, written by agnostics in London and read by Nonconformists in the country. My own belief is that these occurrences 'do not happen.' From my own experience, I should say that they are not so much exaggerated as altogether fictitious. I have never seen such a case, never heard of one, never read of one which would bear looking into for a single moment. With the best will in the world the Nonconformists are never able to discover such a case. Think of their organisations, their Free Church Councils, their stars from London scouring the country in motor cars,

their members of Parliament, their newspapers—does any one doubt that if such a case occurred anywhere that all England would be ringing with it in less than a week? Imagine the *Daily News* on Monday morning —'The Little Tiddlington Scandal: Fearless Utterance by Mr. Silvester Horne: Dr. Clifford Speaks Out.' I once challenged my antagonists in a newspaper correspondence to produce a case of priestly tyranny in a village. The only thing that could be wrung from them was an extract from a parish magazine about the Vigil of St. James, and the advantage of belonging to the Apostolic Church. But if this is persecution, every one who holds an opinion of whatever kind is a persecutor of those who do not hold it. Sometimes in darkest Bucks or Oxfordshire the chapel children are 'bribed' by being given buns. If they had no buns they would be 'branded.' The worst case I ever read of was of a clergyman going into the school and giving out before all the children that the Church children would have their treat on Tuesday. But the cries of despair

over all this oppression, as from prisoners *sotto i piombi*, or exiles amid Siberian snows, do not come from the victims themselves. They issue from Bouverie Street, from Westbourne Park, and from the Holborn Restaurant.

The fact is that under the 'domination' of the Anglican clergy the evils of intemperate zeal are reduced to a minimum. They are too educated, too tolerant, too worldly, if you like, to be fanatical or persecuting. They would probably be more successful if more sacred fury filled their breasts. As a body of men they are most anxious not to offend the consciences of others. I remember a chapel 'house boy' who said it was 'against his conscience' to clean the rector's boots on Sunday. 'I don't wish any one to do anything against his conscience, Jim,' was the mild reply. 'I think a steady-going clergyman is a very nice thing to have in a place,' said a woman to me one day. Here and there, of course, there are wild curates, but the vast majority of the country clergy are 'steady-going.'

The people themselves, it must be remembered, even when theologically inclined, are not first and foremost theologians, and they have so many real grievances and sufferings that they do not make grievances where none exist. In winter their fifteen shillings a week is often cut down to twelve because they lose the wet days, and if their employer has not a cottage of his own to spare for them, they have to pay five shillings a week rent instead of three. This at least is the case with agricultural labourers in the southern counties. It takes four years' hard, unremitting toil for a man to earn a hundred and fifty pounds. A woman told me the other day that all last winter the children had nothing to eat but bread, and that all that time her legs had been so bad that she had crawled up and down stairs on her hands and knees. People in this situation are not likely to take a great interest in theological differences, or to lose their sleep at night because their children are taught a too sacramental doctrine. They really desire the children's good, although they are not always

very wise in the means they take to attain it. They want the school to be a good one, they want the children to be well taught and kindly treated, they want it if possible to be near the home, and they would like what they consider a reasonable liberty in keeping them from school in what is, after all, very often urgent need. Above and beyond all this they like them to be taught the Christian religion. They do not distinguish theological differences very clearly, and I have never known one who had the least suspicion that there was anything wrong with the Catechism. Over and over again when told that in the new Council School the Catechism may not be taught, they have said to me, 'Well, I can't understand it—I never knew a school where the Catechism wasn't taught before.' They one and all in my parish signed a petition in favour of the Church schools, which was lately circulated, with the most unfeigned willingness, the greatest alacrity. 'Yes, I'll sign that gladly,' they said. The immense majority, the vast overwhelming majority of parents in the villages through

the country like the clergyman to go in and out of the school. The idea that he is not allowed to do so, his disappearance when the school is 'taken over,' fills them with amazement. It is a shock to all their ideas of the fitness of things. That is what the parson is there for, they think. 'What I says is that when parson's in the school he's in his proper place,' is their universal sentiment. For a long time they cannot take it in, then they say, 'Well, I never heard of such a thing in all my born days.'

This state of mind is not surprising when we consider what the history of the village schools has been, and how in all their recollection it is the parson and the parson's wife that have kept them going. They know that if any village boy learned to read before 1870 it was through their self-denying labours. They remember old Mrs. Merryweather losing her shoes in the mud in the dark lanes on winter nights, on the way to the night-school to teach the hobble-de-hoys. They remember the buns and school-treats in the summer, the carols at Christmas, the getting

primroses for the church at Easter, the practising an anthem, and bringing big turnips for the Harvest Festival. It was not always very enlightened from any point of view—I remember one man telling me that, as a boy at school, he had been required to learn the Thirty-nine Articles by heart—but it was so much well-meant, kindly, human effort, it was a Christian tradition and system which I verily believe they would like, if the gentlemen in London would let them, to hand on to their children, with all such improvements as a more modern intelligence may suggest.

I believe that this feeling is fully shared by the country Dissenters when they are left to themselves. The Dissenting villagers in large parts of Yorkshire, for instance, have no hostility to the Church or the parson. They find the chapels more warm and fervid, more familar, but, as I was once told, 'we look on the parish church as our principal place of worship.' The old-fashioned Dissenters, especially the Methodists, had a custom of going to church in the morning

and to chapel in the evening. That was before they had learned to call themselves 'Free Churchmen.' A kindly feeling often exists. I remember one man, a local preacher, talking to me about the rector. 'Mr. Ellison don't give a very clear witness,' he told me, 'but if I wants a little bit of comfort I goes to Mr. Ellison, and if I wants pecoonery assistance, it's to Mr. Ellison I goes.' North country villagers generally are very pleased to have a local preacher to tea, but if they can get a real clergyman their delight knows no bounds. I don't think old-fashioned village Nonconformists regard church and chapel teaching as antagonistic. Certainly country people in general do not. It would fill their simple minds with amazement to be told that one kind of Christian doctrine was taught in church, another different one in chapel, and that a third, different to both and not really satisfactory to either party, was to be set up in the school. I have no doubt that they feel dimly and confusedly what one feels oneself, that the destruction of the unity in the framework of the children's lives, the causing of

antagonism, or at least distance and estrangement between church and school, is a most evil and mischievous, as well as altogether unnecessary thing.

It is easy to laugh at the 'Anglican parent.' In the conscious, sectarian, argumentative state, I dare say he hardly exists. As I have said, village people are for the most part not theologians. I remember indeed, in Tractarian literature, a villager called, I believe, 'Old Richard,' who used to argue for the Apostolic Succession with singular acuteness, and in a manner recalling the more refined and subtle vein of Dr. Newman. But such men are rare. The villagers of the *Monthly Packet* are indeed occasionally to be found, and such old ladies as might have curtsied to Mr. Keble at Hursley. A remark of one of George Eliot's characters describes the old-fashioned village church-goer better than anything else I remember in literature (alas! that one should so often have to write 'old-fashioned'). I cannot quote the sentence, but it is something like this: 'When I hear the organ and the singing, and Mr.

Crackanthorpe saying good words, I feel so set up as never was.' A man said to me as we walked home from church one Trinity Sunday, 'When you hears Mr. Elphinstone, you knows it's all as proper as can be.' 'I do so like Morning Service,' you will sometimes hear. 'I think they're such solemn words.' This refers no doubt to the impetrations of the Litany, and the Nicene Creed, and the sacred and mysterious Eucharistic language of Christendom. 'I come to church to do my duty to my Maker, my Saviour, and my Worshipper,' said one good old man. The old objective Christianity, the dwelling on the facts of the Gospels, the deep reverence for the sacraments, the folk-lore of the Middle Ages, is not even yet extinct. In a village near this I know an old cottage woman who always puts on something white in which to come to church on Maunday Thursday. At the risk of being laughed at I will tell a story which illustrates this. The other day I met Mrs. Pellett starting to drive her donkey to market. We exchanged a few words about the weather and about Neddy. 'I look on him as an

'oly animal,' she remarked; 'my mother always instilled it into me that ever since our Saviour rode on his back into Jerusalem he's never been without the sign of the Cross. I'm sure it's most distinct on Neddy.' Cynical modern readers will no doubt look upon this as a piece of hypocritical blarney, but I am sure it was not. Mrs. Pellett would hold up both hands for the Church schools. 'Our Saviour,' by the way, is the reverent title which old-fashioned country communicants always use. From the speech of Cowper-Temple children the 'our' will at once be dropped, and eventually I fear the 'Saviour.' The communicants I speak of are mostly found among the 'residents,' as they proudly style themselves, the people who have been settled in the village for years, perhaps for generations, in contradistinction to the class, alas, always increasing, of 'them as comes and goes.'

To the dispassionate observer there would appear to be a hundred reasons why the village parson should not be turned out of the village school. He has very probably—he or his

predecessor—toiled to build it, and impoverished himself to maintain it. He cared for the education of the poor when nobody else did. In country villages at this moment he is very often the only human being who has any interest in education or any belief in it. The Squire will perhaps tell you that 'education is the ruin of this country.' The belief of the farmer very often is, 'God made little boys to scare the rook and the crow,' from the age of seven and upwards, not to waste precious time in book-learning. The one idea of the small Radical tradesman is to keep down the rates. The anxiety of the parents for the blissful moment to arrive when the children can leave school and begin earning for themselves is pathetic. The parson knows the children. If he is worth his salt he feels that there is a real tie between himself and the children whom he has baptised. He knows each one by name, has seen them toddle into Standard II., and progress up to Standard VI. He knows their homes, and all the idiosyncrasies of village childish life. He knows, for instance,

having year after year ministered to their needs on summer lawns, that they prefer good bread and butter, such as they do not get at home, to any amount of fancy cakes. He is quick to note any boy of superior intelligence, or with special aptitude. Such a lad is almost sure of receiving help and encouragement from the parish clergyman. One has heard again and again of village lads going to the rectory for lessons in Latin and algebra, or what not, sometimes of their gaining scholarships at grammar schools as a result of such help. There are country clergyman who make a hobby of this. The parson has time to take an interest in the school, and he is often the only man in the parish who has. He is on the spot, he lives in the village, not miles away in the county town, like the vague and distant official of the County Council, who 'runs' the school in his place. This is probably a solicitor, whom the children never see, who, from the nature of the case, is in no sort of touch with them, and can take no interest in them, but who is well paid for doing the work the clergyman had done for

years for nothing. There is much talk of 'atmosphere' in this controversy, but nothing more bleak and unhomelike can be imagined than the atmosphere of a Church school which has passed into County Council hands. Nothing is seen or heard of its new protector, and its old and tried friend and well-wisher has been alienated and driven away. It is impossible to get a broken window mended. It struggles on uncheered and unvisited by human sympathy of any kind. The unknown, the intangible, and the blank takes the place of the known, the homely, and the familiar. The question of Little Peterkin recurs to the mind. What is the good of it? The County Council Hall at Kingston may be depicted on the children's certificates instead of Winchester Cathedral; but you cannot alter English history, you cannot do away with the cathedrals and parish churches, though you may draw the children's affection from them and dissociate them from their lives. But is it worth while? Have you anything better to put in their place? Why should the clergyman be driven away and

robbed of his legitimate influence by the very people who are always crying out because his influence for good is not all-powerful? Why should this wretched schism be made in the life of the village? I do not use the word 'schism' in its technical sense, but in a very true and real one nevertheless.

There is a great tradition, a great authority, there is one great Name on which the whole civilisation of Europe has been built. In every village in Europe there is some one to represent this tradition and this Name. He may be known as the Rector, or M. le Curé, or il signor parocco, or der Herr Pfarrer, or the 'meenister,' or Father O'Flanagan. He is practically always a friendly presence, occasionally a gracious and venerable one. It was surely a kindly custom that he should go in and out of the village school and that in church the schoolmaster should play the organ. It was surely good thus to 'work together,' as country people so often say. There is not the least sign on the horizon of anything to take the place of the tradition

which the parish priest represents. No one, I suppose, seriously proposes to build the national life on a foundation of agnosticism. The enthusiasm for Bushido as a substitute for Christianity, so fashionable a year or two ago, is already on the wane. Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay; the youngest and simplest Christian child has something which makes him other, as we think 'higher,' than the oldest and cleverest Japanese. The Nonconformist ministers have no doubt a grievance, but there is just one practical consideration to be thought of: there is not a Nonconformist minister in every village, and there is a clergyman. He can do the work, very unpretentious, very unostentatious, very unremunerative, but surely most useful, which the other, from the nature of the case, cannot do, if only because he is not there to do it, of teaching all the children in the parish the Faith of the Apostles' Creed. I would ask those who wish to destroy this in England to pause and consider what it is they are going to do.

A WORD FOR THE VILLAGE PUBLIC HOUSE

At a meeting of the Board of Guardians in a South country town it was recently proposed that the time-honoured custom of celebrating Christmas by allowing the paupers half a pint of beer with their beef and pudding should be discontinued, and that mineral waters should be substituted. Now, Christmas in this Protestant land is the one festival which is still allowed to interfere in some slight degree with the grim rigidity of the treatment meted out to the poor and the unhappy. We do not, I believe, go the length of showing any kindness to our prisoners on Christmas Day, but this half-pint of Christmas beer is almost the last remnant left to us of the old-world practice of allowing some large and general consideration, the celebration of some event

which all recognise as being of transcendent and universal importance, to break in upon the hard routine of things. 'Every year at the feast of the Passover he released unto them a prisoner.' In Christendom this was done constantly, for instance, on Ascension Day. The poor old people's beef and pudding and beer at Christmas is the last vestige retained by us of this truly large-minded and humane custom of the ancient world—of the whole world, that is, before the French Revolution. The Guardians discussed the proposal. In the remarks made by these ladies and gentlemen on this occasion, I think we may see the extent to which Chadband, if no longer among us, still rules our spirits from his urn. One Guardian observed that the old people should not be allowed whilst in the workhouse to indulge in what had brought them there. (This, in rural districts, in the vast majority of cases is absolutely untrue.) Another, a lady, said she feared that if the beer were allowed some might negotiate exchanges with their pudding, and so get a double share. (If they did so, he

who preferred beer would in this case have a pint, against which must be set the compensating advantage that the lover of pudding would have no beer at all.) But the gem of the whole discussion was the remark contributed by an opulent alderman who disclaimed all fanaticism in the matter. 'They must not think,' he said, 'that he was a rabid teetotaler—on the contrary, he hoped shortly to be enjoying a glass of excellent champagne, but he thought the old people would be just as well satisfied with mineral water.' 'Minerals' is the word generally used on these occasions to describe gingerbeer. Imagine the poor old people, numb and frozen in the winter of their lives, on an English winter day, washing down the one festive dinner of the year with the cold, sticky, gassy stuff! As I personally dislike beer extremely, it has sometimes been my lot to spend a festive evening on these 'mineral waters,' and I know what it is like. I am thankful to say that by a narrow majority of votes the poor old people were saved from this experience last Christmas Day. However, as the teetotalers will no

doubt renew the attack, it probably lies before them next time. The Workhouse Master deserves a word of praise. 'I will hold up both hands for the old people having their beer,' said this kind-hearted and sensible man.

The whole discussion well illustrates the tendency which appears to be continually growing of ascribing all the ills from which our poorer brethren suffer to the one cause of drink. I am convinced that this is nothing more than a salve to the consciences of the well-to-do classes. As long as Dives can say, and believe, that the only thing the matter with Lazarus is drink, he feels absolved from seriously troubling any further about him. It is a slander to assume as a matter of course that the old people in the workhouse are there as the result of intemperance. In the case of the agricultural poor it is extremely difficult to see how they can end their days anywhere else. In the course of twenty years as a country parson in remote country villages, I have known many poor old people, both men and women, taken off to the Union, and only in one single instance could this be

ascribed to intemperance. One knows the typical case so well—the wife dying, the poor old man left alone, breaking up, past work, going, say, from Guildford to a married daughter in a village somewhere near Newbury. There he is another mouth to feed (of course, he really requires little extra delicacies and comforts). He is in the way, cumbering the ground in the over-crowded cottage where there are still young children; he sits moping by the fire, crippled with rheumatism, unable to walk out, dizzy with the noise and confusion, to the son-in-law an unwelcome guest, the cause of 'words' between husband and wife. He 'gets unsettled,' and begs to be sent back to Guidford to the Union. For my own part, I deny the very possibility of such an old man having saved a proper provision for his old age. These Surrey labourers bring up large families on fifteen shillings a week in winter and nineteen shillings in summer, three of which must be paid every week for rent. This income cannot leave an excessive margin for squandering at the public-house.

After all the children are brought up, are in some fashion fed and clothed. 'It is drink, my friend,' says the genial alderman to such an old man, eyeing him kindly but firmly over his Heidsieck or Pommery, 'that has brought you to your present state of degradation—it shall not be permitted to degrade you further whilst you are under our care.'

> Dickens, thou shouldst be living at this hour,
> England hath need of thee.

My own conviction is that drunkenness is an effect rather than a cause—the result of evil social conditions, and that it is decreasing with the improvement of those conditions, altogether inadequate as that improvement as yet is. One can only speak from one's own experience, and in my own experience of twenty years of rural England I have known very little real unhappiness caused by drink. I have certainly known a few homes made wretched by it. But drunkards might surely be restrained without interfering with the freedom of the whole community. Of course I have known many,

both men and women, who occasionally took a drop too much, and became rather noisy in consequence, but nothing by which serious unhappiness was caused. It must be remembered that a very little often has this effect, when it is not of the excellent quality of the alderman's champagne, and is taken by people not too well fed, after long hours of work in the open air. Apropos of this, a cottage woman described to me her only experience of the sensation of being 'elevated' by drink. She had been at work all day in the hopfields with some friends from London, who on their return home persuaded her to have a glass of 'gin and cloves.' 'London people,' she explained—'of course, great people for gin and cloves.' She had one small glass of this liqueur, and came home 'dancing and singing.' All we, their 'betters,' who are not teetotalers, though certainly not drunkards, may sometimes take more than they do in their worst excesses. I speak of course of the great mass. On the other hand, what sordid and squalid village tragedies one has again and again seen with which

drink has had nothing whatever to do—the immorality, the insanity, the suicides caused by overcrowding in wretched cottages, and by the wearing monotony of lives spent in the most depressing and crushing circumstances of poverty and toil. It is a minor matter, but I have never heard any drunken man use such horrible language as I have sometimes heard in cottages from perfectly sober women who were overwrought, and broke down under the strain of their hard lives. The short and easy way of saying 'It's all the drink' has no sort of correspondence with the facts. What the people want is more and better food, larger and better houses, more variety and brightness in their lives. This last is a great need. They love *anything* that takes them out of themselves. 'I should so like to see an execution,' said a woman to me the other day. Every one who lives among them knows how hard their lives are, and I do not believe that in rural England the public-house makes them appreciably worse. Some of them get a little noisy, a little beery, on Saturday night

—a maudlin expansiveness takes the place of the grim rigidity of conscious rectitude. 'God bless you, sir,' so to speak, takes the place of 'I ain't goin' to say "good-night" to he.' The whole of the money spent would not add greatly to the quantity or quality of the children's food. If any considerable amount were so spent, the children must starve. But this they do not do. Fifteen to twenty shillings a week somehow or other enables large families to keep body and soul together.

When all has been said of the evil wrought by the village public-house, it must be remembered that it represents a perennial human need and instinct, just as the village church does, that it is in fact a necessary human thing. In every country of Europe we find this meeting-place for refreshment and recreation when the toil of the day is done, the *Gasthaus*, the *auberge*, the *albergo*. There must be some better way, one thinks, than the way of suppression for so integral a part of the life of a normal village. It must be borne in mind that in the villages the public-house (for the most part) is the only

meeting-place or club where the men can meet in a perfectly unembarrassed and informal way, and talk of things that really interest them, where in an atmosphere of warmth and good fellowship they can for an hour or so forget their misery and remember their poverty no more, to quote the words of the Bible on this very point. It is a mere blind pedantry to expect that after the exhausting labours of the fields in August sun and January frost, in fog and rain, they will spend their time in reading *The Cloister and the Hearth*, or playing scientific whist. I have myself seen the complete desertion of a village reading-room in which beer was at first allowed, but which it was afterwards attempted to run upon 'temperance' lines. Even now many of the older men cannot read, nor, save in some very special crisis, like the South African War, is there any very keen interest in the affairs of the wider world. It is in the public-house, of course, that events of this kind are discussed by the men, just as the Napoleonic legend must have been discussed in Surrey and Hampshire

country public-houses by their great-grandfathers. But there is not a war every day, and ordinarily the interest in public events is lukewarm. Nor can much interest be got up in games like whist (I speak of course only of agricultural labourers, and more particularly of the older men). One man, I remember, a parish clerk, who took a keen but not very enlightened interest in the 'beautiful and deathstruck' game. He would claim the turn-up trump card from the dealer, saying, 'I think I ought to have the benefit of the doubt.' On one occasion he had a very poor hand, which, however, contained the ace and king of trumps. 'Only two trumps and made 'em both,' he exclaimed triumphantly. But this is rare. The majority will have none of it. What they want is to take their ease for an hour or so in an atmosphere of comfort, and perhaps turn over the local newspaper and talk of local matters, the deaths, the sales, the removals, and how the turnips are looking, and it soon being time to plant potatoes. You will hear many scraps of weather lore, 'March mistës, May frostës,'

and the like. To any one who wishes to know what a Surrey village is like, and the lives of the village people, I recommend that truly admirable piece of work, the *Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer*, by Mr. Hugh Bourne. It gives the very atmosphere and impression of their lives. From the reading-room of which I have been speaking, when the beer vanished, the men went too, They do not care for the news and games, or even for the gossip, unless they can wash all down with a glass or two of beer.

No doubt to many this will seem deplorable, just as it seems deplorable that the old workhouse people should find their beer a comfort at Christmas time. But I seem to catch echoes of an older and kinder teaching enshrined in a very old and human book, which takes a different view of this weakness, if you like to call it so, to that commonly taken at the present day. I hear a Royal Singer praising as one of God's best gifts 'wine that maketh glad the heart of a man'; I hear another King, said to have been the wisest of mankind, saying, 'give

wine to them that are of heavy heart' ; I read of a more august Figure still, who 'when they wanted wine' at a village wedding feast, saw that they were abundantly supplied. It was to an inn again that the Good Samaritan carrried the wounded traveller, and it was wine and oil which he poured into his wounds. Nowhere is there a hint that the innkeeper who offers rest and refreshment to all comers does not discharge a perfectly honourable and useful office, or that it is an act of piety and charity to plunder him and close the doors of his inn. Let no one think that I am pleading for drunkenness, or that I wish the men to have their hour's warmth and comfort at the expense of their wives and children's hunger and cold. But I am convinced that the true cure for the evils of drunkenness is not to be found in violent and unjust legislation. There are at the present day many forces at work making for temperance (by which I do not mean teetotalism), and I am conscious that much of what I have written above, though true of the older people, is no longer true of those who have

grown up since 1870. I see no disposition to drunkenness in the young men and lads growing up around me. To them drink will not be nearly such a besetting temptation as it was to their fathers. The true way to solve the drink question, I am convinced, is to strengthen the moral and educational influences already at work, and to improve the whole social condition of the people. As this is done the drink question will largely settle itself.

A QUIET VILLAGE

THE village, as it comes back to my memory, wears an aspect of dignified and somnolent repose. It lies in open, level country, cut up into chess-board fields, where the tall spires of noble churches stand as beacons visible for miles, far from big towns and highways, 'out of the world' as we say, in a land of incredible quiet and remoteness. It consists of a little labyrinth of cottages, twisting crookedly around the church, a pleasant and spacious Rectory, breathing of *otium cum dignitate*, a farmhouse or two, a mill, and two or three villas, the abodes of residents of varying degrees of gentility. There is no Squire or Manor House.

The Rector, when I knew him, some dozen years ago, was then far on in the eighties, and one could not desire to look upon a more

beautiful and venerable old man. He might have been the presentation of old age, in its most dignified and attractive aspect, portrayed by some great painter. A scholar of no mean attainments, he and his wife, some twenty years younger than himself, had lived for years a life of unbroken quiet and leisure at the Rectory. They received no company, and only on the rarest occasions left the village. The drawing-room of the Rectory was a library, the walls of which were lined with books from top to bottom. I see the Rector now, making his brief turn in the village on a winter afternoon, and coming back to tea in the library drawing-room in the January twilight. 'I always express the very greatest admiration for my parishioners and their doings,' he exclaimed one day, adding sharply, 'although of course I have my own opinion.' It must be candidly admitted that these naïve artifices were not at all times very successful. Words, of course, are powerless to describe the mental gulf which separated the Rector from the bulk of his parishioners. He

had begun, years before, in the zeal of comparative youth by reading 'Paradise Lost' to them. But these efforts had been soon abandoned. The reading aloud of English literature to the country poor is indeed one of the very earliest illusions to fold its tents like the Arabs and silently steal away. I myself remember reading Rudyard Kipling's little masterpiece 'The Strange Side of Morrowbie Jukes' (which, after all, is very different from Milton) to a gathering of young lads, all engaged in farm work. When the reading was done, I asked the most intelligent-looking of them if he had enjoyed the story, and received the reply, monosyllabic but long-drawn out, 'No-a-a.' On another occasion the schoolmistress undertook to read Dickens to the assembled village. She read on and on, amid a complete silence, not of attention, but of respectful resignation. She went from Pickwick to Little Dombey, from Mrs. Nickleby to Tiny Tim. Looking up suddenly, and becoming aware of the blank rows of unsmiling faces, she broke off and exclaimed 'Shall I go on?' 'No,

ma'am,' came from all parts of the room at once, in tones of the utmost politeness, but of a really desperate firmness. I saw the other day in a Socialist publication some scathing remarks upon a country reading-room, run by the squire and the parson, in which an old Crockford formed the *pièce de resistance* of the literary fare provided for the members. For my own part, I consider the selection an admirable one, and far more likely to give pleasure to the villagers than Milton, Dickens, or Rudyard Kipling. Like a breviary it would require some little practice before they knew how to use it, but having once mastered its main principles, the rustics would be able to look out the names of the local clergy, and trace their various careers. The recollection of those who had been removed by death—as it was an old volume—would afford opportunities for the moralising so dear to the rustic mind. The pleasure of seeing names one knows in print is what lends such an unfailing charm, incomprehensible to the outsider, to the reading of the local news-

paper. I have known villagers who read it through, from beginning to end, twice every week. A not dissimilar interest might be afforded by Crockford.

But to return to the good old Doctor. Although he did not endeavour directly to impart his erudition to his parishioners, old or young, a fine aroma of learning breathed from his sermons and conversation in parochial visits. 'We owe a cock to Æsculapius,' he would say, when paying some small bill in the village. On examining the 'Marriage of Cana' on a cottage wall, he would remark 'I see—yes—that is the Symposiarch.' I greatly enjoyed listening to his sermons, which, perhaps not unnaturally, dealt continually with the subject of old age. One New Year for three successive Sundays we had thus meditated *de senectute*, and as the Doctor mounted the pulpit on the second Sunday after the Epiphany, my mind was stirred with a pleasing expectation of variety and change. But I had reckoned without the opportunities afforded by the Gospel for the day. He announced the text 'But thou hast

kept the good wine until now,' and beginning 'These words, the old man's comfort,' preached a touching sermon, which he brought to a close with the lines from 'Rabbi ben Ezra':

> Grow old along with me!
> The Best is yet to be.

His pulpit manner was marked by extreme deliberation, and was of the most ample and majestic kind. He would give out his text in this way: 'In that grand chapter, appointed by the Church as the first lesson at morning prayer on the twenty-second Sunday after Trinity—I allude, as you will all doubtless be aware, to the sixty-fifth chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah—in the concluding portion of the eighteenth verse, you will find these words written'—rolling out the sonorous syllables of words like 'Trinity' and 'Isaiah,' and making long pauses at each comma. This method of elocution was a source of torture to the Doctor's Churchwarden, who sat immediately under the pulpit, the principal figure of a somewhat scanty congregation.

This gentleman, through some internal injury, was unable to maintain the same posture for two consecutive minutes without feeling acute physical pain, and tossed and twisted violently from side to side under the calm and unperturbed flow of the Doctor's eloquence. The spectacle of these writhings and the knowledge of the sufferings they represented, spoiled, I must confess, the effect of the sermons for me.

Outwardly the *ne plus ultra* of calm, the little village was in reality torn by feuds as bitter as ever vexed any Urbino or Gubbio of mediæval days. These feuds were rather between the scanty representatives of the upper classes than among the cottagers. 'I hate the turnpike,' was a frequent exclamation of the Churchwarden last referred to. His house stood on one side of the road—on the other, at regular intervals, the three remaining better houses of the village. These were, first the Rectory; then the comfortable dwelling of an old gentleman retired from some species of business, I know not what, a bachelor who amused himself with the collection of old china, and with a garden, bees, and

poultry, known familiarly in the village as 'Old Binks'; and, thirdly, highest flight of our nobility, a gloomy mansion with clipped hedges and yew trees cut into strange shapes, inhabited by a lady whom we will call Miss Nevinson. She lived an extremely sequestered life and never came to church. Her view of things indeed was old régime and cynical in the extreme, and her apathy towards all local affairs complete, save for the vivacious scorn which she poured upon the social pretensions of 'that man Gervase' (the Churchwarden) and his wife. Between the inhabitants of the three houses on the one side of the turnpike and the Gervases on the other, there reigned a hostility of equal intensity, varying only in the degree of its outward expression. This was naturally most open in the case of old Binks. The Churchwarden, I should say, had been a gentleman farmer, had lost money by farming, and when I knew him was living with his wife and young daughter in this remote spot a life devoid of society, and with very little interest or occupation of any kind. In these circumstances the Church is often 'a

home for the lonely.' The unfortunate thing was that it was precisely the parochial activities of the Gervases which angered their neighbours more than anything else. The very sight of them roused old Binks, for the most part a kindly and jovial old soul, to an absolutely demoniac fury. 'Here comes my lady Mary,' he would say with withering sarcasm, and shaking all over with noiseless laughter, as he caught sight of poor little Mrs. Gervase in the distance, carrying beef tea and jelly to the poor. The idea both of Miss Nevinson and old Binks (opposed to one another on all other points, but joined in the closest union on this) was that in performing the Corporal Works of Mercy Mrs. Gervase was stepping outside of her appointed sphere. This idea was, however, most unfounded, as on one occasion the Gervases had entertained an Earl to luncheon.

With the Rector Old Binks was on good terms. He usually expressed an unbounded admiration for his character and learning, and received his most recondite allusions with an

air of intense admiration and enjoyment, but absolutely declined to attend Church as long as the Gervases did so. 'I couldn't go—oh, dear! no,' he would say; 'I should see the Devil—I'm sure I should—sitting in front of me with his wife by his side.' 'Mr. Gervase will not assassinate you,' the Doctor would urge, 'and even if he should, you would fall as a martyr, engaged in the performance of you duty.' To the onlooker, it appeared far less probable that Gervase would assassinate Binks than that Binks would assassinate Gervase. It was indeed a wonder, seeing the hostility by which the latter was surrounded, that morning by morning he rose up undaunted, and evening by evening lay down unconsumed. *Ecce Daniel in medio leonum.* Binks, however, was not by any means without his foes. A great detestation for him was cherished by the miller, who was jealously guarding a dozen bottles of some rare vintage, or what he imagined to be such, against the day of his enemy's death. 'As soon as I hear the breath's out of his body,' he would say, 'I means to open them bottles,

and call the whole village to come in and drink.' I do not know from what obscure occasions these hatreds arose—in all probability originally from quite trivial causes—but I am glad to be able to state that at the reconciling moment of the Jubilee feast in 1897, the feud between Mr. Gervase and Old Binks was healed. They shook hands, and from that moment Binks was positively unctuous in his proffers of assistance of all kinds to his so long insulted neighbour. 'I was not aware that Miss Gervase walked to the station every morning on her way to school,' he would remark, 'or I should have sent the carriage—I'm sure I should.'

When last I visited the village a sad change had passed over the fortunes of the poor old gentleman. He had lost money in speculations, and in law suits, to which he was greatly addicted. He no longer inhabited the pleasant house upon the turnpike, with its shelves of china soup plates and tea cups, and its great bow windows facing due South, in which one saw big pears and green tomatoes set to ripen in the autumn sun.

The garden with its tulips and asparagus beds, the beehives and bantams, the gold and silver pheasants behind their wires, knew him no more. He was living in all the discomfort and confusion of a crowded labourer's cottage. When I saw him he was seated by the fireside in a great arm-chair—saved with a few other pieces of furniture from the wreck. The complete want of privacy must have been torture to him. His once genial and rubicund face was pale with vexation and sorrow. The old Rector, for whom he had had so great a regard, was gone, and a zealous enthusiast for humanity had taken his place. The new broom was sweeping vigorously in all directions. Among other things a sermon had been preached in which very pointed reference had been made to the sanitary condition of a row of cottages in which the old man was interested. 'We have a very talented man at present,' he said, with the old sarcasm and the old silent laugh—'the Reverend Wilson Gardener. His sermons are lumber—not Scripture.' He admitted that for the time being there was

great enthusiasm in the parish. 'He has the wealth of Calcutta behind him,' he explained, in caustic explanation. This, I found afterwards, referred to some wealthy Americans from Philadelphia who were spending the summer in the village.

One other familiar figure of the old régime I must mention, for I remember her well. She was a Miss Annie Wilmore, the Doctor's great supporter and ally. She lived alone without a servant in a house far bigger than she needed, which had been included in the portion of goods which had fallen to her, but which was more a source of trouble and worry to her than anything else. A very large proportion of her small income was spent in good works. On Missionary Sundays she would put gold into the bag. On All Saints' Day, St. Thomas's Day, St. John's Day, she gave entertainments to different classes of the community—the old people, the widows, the Sunday School children. On those good Tractarian days, and indeed on all possible days, she would be in her place in Church. 'Miss Annie, Miss

Annie,' the good old Doctor would cry out joyfully, as he caught sight of her in the village. Her great trouble was her big house, in which living alone she suffered mortal terror. When the season of thunderstorms came on, she fled from the village altogether, and took refuge in the nearest town. 'I am so afraid of thunder,' she would very often say. It made her tremble all over. 'I don't mind the lightning,' cottage people indeed will often tell you, 'but I am afeared of thunder.' I think the terrific sound is connected in their minds with the trump of Doom. It probably was in Miss Annie's. She delighted in giving to all and sundry. Lads working in the garden or about the house were feasted by her, and she never turned her face away from any poor man. Her sister, Miss Susan Wilmore, also lived alone in the village, but she, on the other hand, was a misanthrope of the most farouche description, and refused to open her doors to anybody. The Doctor would shake his head and sigh sadly when he spoke of her case. For years she had not deigned him word or sign.

Under the social heaven illuminated by these various lights—the Doctor and his wife, Miss Nevinson, the Gervases, old Binks, and the two Miss Wilmores—moved a dim, patient population. I confess that of these I have very little individual recollection. One impression, however, no one could fail to receive, and that was of a kind of wintry cheerfulness in which they were all enwrapped, a content of resignation, the calm of people who never expected anything to happen, or that things would ever be different or better. The village was a very damp one, and they were all crippled and crooked with rheumatism. Bronchitis, asthma, lumbago, one heard of continually. They were largely a population of old people—old couples who had seen their children grow up and go out of the village into the world. On winter evenings they would sit for a little, without a light, by crackling fires of sticks, chatting light-heartedly, but with a faint tinge of bitterness, a certain flavour of orange peel in their talk about old days in the village, the old parsons and farmers and schoolmistresses, this 'kind

creature' and that 'good soul,' the friends who had died, the children who had gone, the hard winters and bad times poor people had known, and then they would go to bed in the dark at about half-past six to prevent the invasion of *ennui*, and to save fire and candle. A certain eerie gaiety is the impression that remains to me from these conversations. You shivered slightly, and at the same time laughed. The uncensoriousness which distinguished them from any other villagers I have ever known must, I think, be attributed to the fact that they were so largely a community of the aged. The years had brought a tolerant wisdom, demonstrating the futility of making extravagant demands on human frailty. I remember the clergyman of a neighbouring parish being deprived of his living for long continued drunkenness. 'They may say what they like,' one old lady remarked, 'but I shall always consider that he did a great work at Brinckton. A very hard worker in the garden, and a first-class carpenter.' A large proportion of them were invalids of various kinds, who

never left their cottages under any circumstances whatever. The liberating moment of the Jubilee of 1897, to which I have referred already, brought with it, however, a wholesome troubling of the stagnant waters. On that occasion, the most stationary somehow managed to rise up and walk, and put themselves into the pool. They attended the dinner which began at noon, and, lasting till late in the day, was followed by a ball at night, and were all still there, as cold potatoes, remnants of the earlier feast, were handed round as refreshments at two o'clock in the morning.

THE POVERTY OF THE COTTAGE

THERE is in the world no more pathetic figure than the cottage mother who has to feed her small brood on fifteen shillings a week. As a country parson, I who write these lines have seen this strain and struggle at close hand, and know of what I write. Perhaps my view of the sufferings and needs of the poor is sharpened by the recollection of daily personal annoyances—as, for instance, of the woman who brought in my very modest lunch, putting a chop on the table with great emphasis, and saying at the same time, 'Bobby's cryin'; he ain't had enough.' She was the mother of eight. Her predecessor had had only one little boy, who at *le déjeûner de M. le Curé* had always appeared with a plate to carry off his portion; but with eight

this was clearly impossible. It is to be feared that to the small, hungry-eyed crowd the parson must have appeared a Sardanapalus. At any rate, he often ate his lunch with compunction, thinking of the 'dinners' the children had taken to school, and of the man who worked at a distance, wrapped up in a sack on wet days, drinking his cold tea in the rain.

The result of all this experience is that I believe the great need of the poor to be a sufficiency of good and wholesome food, and this is just what at present they do not get. There is, indeed, deep wisdom and truth in the remark of the late Lord Salisbury that what they need is "a circus." Who has a word to say against the circus? But let her know her place, she is the second, not the first. The First is Food. At present, let it be repeated, the children of the poor, the growing boys and girls, do not have enough to eat. 'What does it matter if the people are half-starved, so long as the country forges ahead?' enquires the hero of a very brightly-written Tariff Reform novel. I, for one, do

not think that if the people are half-starved the country will forge very far. Again and again I have known young girls go to service as soon as they have left school, and after a month or two of blacking grates and carrying buckets up and down stairs come home spitting blood. 'All these young gals has this 'ere 'neemyer,' sagely commented the parish clerk, 'comes o' drinkin' so much ginger beer.' It is probable, indeed, that stewed tea and temperance drinks do not do much towards building up the constitution unless accompanied by plenty of nourishment in a more solid form.

The cottage mother is too often distracted from the primary necessity of getting food for her children by the touching human desire to get more pleasure and brightness for them, to ornament their hard life a little. This is most natural and excusable, but on fifteen shillings a week it is fatal, and the indulgence must be paid for dearly. The packman comes, cheerfully breaking in on her lonely and monotonous day with his strings of pearls and coral, his rings and combs and watches, as

the minstrels came to the castle amid all the dulness and deadness of the mediæval winter, and he is seldom repulsed from the gate. In reality the place of the packman has largely been taken by the 'canvasser' of the instalment system, who persuades the cottage mother to buy some showy article of furniture or novel musical instrument, and pay for it by instalments. The purchase will be made with exultation. 'To give Jojy an insight,' the proud mother will exclaim. When it is seen that the instrument has to be paid for by the whole family having less food, a revulsion of feeling sets in and the tinklings cease.

The woman's failure to make both ends meet is a frequent source of trouble between the labourer and his wife. I have in mind the case of a young farm labourer, who, by the way, bore the name of a great Tractarian leader, marrying a very pretty girl, a slender, dark-eyed little thing, ten years younger than himself. The man was seven-and-twenty, the girl seventeen. 'My poor John Henry,' sighed Mrs. Newman, when she called at the vicar's cottage to announce

her intention of forbidding the banns. 'What can that child know of keeping a house?' She rehearsed the details of the scene with great unction. 'As soon as you see me rise in my place, you'll lean forward, and say, quietly, "All right, Mrs. Newman, I'll see you in the vestry after service."' The good lady did not appear, but her prevision was more than justified. The man was steadiness personified, for all practical purposes a teetotaler. He gave his wife thirteen shillings a week, keeping back two, with which he paid his club and bought all his clothes, besides providing such indulgence in alcohol and tobacco as he permitted himself. The poor child was quite unable to make the thirteen shillings 'do,' and used to run up bills unknown to her husband. When these were discovered there were 'scenes,' and it is to be feared, although he denied it, that he knocked her about. The consequence was that she ran home to her people in the next village. The husband went about his work and home to his cheerless cottage with an expression of comic misery on his honest but not too intelligent face.

'Lonely 'tis, you know,' he remarked, 'no cooked food, you know.' 'Why don't you go and ask your wife to come back,' I suggested. 'They'll begin fightin',' he said, doubtfully. 'I'll come with you,' it was proposed. In the event we went together. I went to the cottage, and left John Henry Newman waiting outside in the lane, till a stage in the discussion had been reached when he might be introduced with safety. The door was opened by a one-armed man, gesticulating violently. It was at once evident that the atmosphere was very stormy. After a great deal of talk they were persuaded to see him quietly. I saw the man and the girl kiss at the gate, and went home to a well-earned meal. The next morning I met John Henry Newman in the road. 'She's coom'd back,' he exclaimed, one broad grin all over his face. Alas, in a year or two the same trouble broke out again, and she again ran off to her parents, now living in a town some little distance away. I went, but failed to see them, and then wrote, but only received, through a round-about channel, the masterly, inactive answer

that they were 'going to receive all letters and answer none.' For the moment the quarrel is patched up, but with quick coming babies, the task of making thirteen shillings a week 'do' will probably not become any easier.

All sorts of expedients are resorted to in the desperate attempt to get enough to live upon. The taking in of lodgers is one of the first, and has often the worst results. One need not dwell on these. Nothing stirs up such a hornet's nest as any attempt to set the Sanitary Inspector on the track of an overcrowded cottage. 'They must want poor people to starve,' you will hear. 'Holiday children' are a more harmless source of income, and a small town girl may be seen carrying a baby as big as herself, or a boy muffled up to his eyes in sacking, scrubbing the bricks, and counting the days till he can leave the cabbages and bee-hives and go back to London.

THE PIETY OF SIMPLE PEOPLE

I HOPE it is not disrespectful to the Church to confess that in my opinion, at least in country places, its value lies not so much in its specific activities as in the fact of its being there. 'It is enough for me,' says a very minor poem, 'not to be doing, but to be.' Public opinion demands a certain amount of 'doing' from the Church, but how very little response the people usually make to these laborious efforts! They look often very coldly on Sunday School Teachers' Associations, Girls' Friendly Societies, and the like. They have no time for such things; no time, for instance, to attend courses of lectures on the best methods of Sunday School teaching. They are busy delving and spinning, sowing and reaping, cooking and washing. As soon as the light evenings begin they are busy in their own gardens.

The Lent Evening Services are more scantily attended as Lent goes on and fervor should increase, because the evenings are longer and there is more time for gardening. The few holidays must on no account be stolen from them. Even more purely philanthropic schemes, such as the provision of a parish nurse, often come into collision with all their habits, and disturb them in many ways. Yet all this does not prove that they are hostile or even indifferent to the Church. It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that they like it to be there. The parson's work is to christen, and marry, and bury them; here he is quite in his place; he performs a function which they look upon as essential; he is apt to be considered a troublesome busybody when urging them to attend meetings and join associations, the objects of which they apprehend but dimly, and the utility of which sometimes appears to them doubtful. Even the fact that many of them do not themselves attend Church does not prove that they are indifferent. They send the old people and the children, the aged with their wisdom and

the young in their innocence, as their true representatives to do the highest and fittest work that they can perform. It is no little thing for them that there should be a place where children can be sent to keep them out of mischief, where poor, doddering old people can get an hour's change and interest on Sunday. The Church is a place of refuge, a home for the lonely, a roof over many generations. 'It's time you got ready for Church, father,' said a young woman known to me on the raw cold morning of a late Sunday after Trinity. The old man, though in general a devoted church-goer, was on this particular Sunday secretly laying plans for a morning of slippered ease by the kitchen fire. 'I don't think I shall go to church this morning, Maud,' he replied. 'I got a cold in me head: me nose runs.' 'Stuff and nonsense!' was his daughter's reply. 'I can't have men-folk about my kitchen on Sunday mornings; you take an 'ankerchief and go.' The old man, grumbling not uncheerfully, dutifully took a handkerchief, and wrapping a thick woollen muffler over his mouth, proceeded

across the foggy fields to join the exiguous band of witnesses to the Nicene Confession.

The existence of the fabric of an ancient Parish Church gives the village people a grasp of continuity, a hold on the future as on the past. This pride in their Parish Church is very great when it is a stately or even magnificent building, as in some parts of England is commonly the case. The piety of simple folk is piety in the true and ancient sense of the word, the feeling for their own earth-corner, their own people, their own dead. All this the fabric of the Church both expresses in itself and protects and consecrates for them. It links them consciously with a large order of things, and sets their little lives amid the innumerable series of years. The delight in bells and bell-ringing is intense in parts of Lincolnshire and East Anglia, where fine peals exist. In a village known to me the bells have recently been rehung. They had hung in the tower for more than a hundred and twenty years. As the great bells stood in the churchyard, in the open air once more, it was like the morning of the

Resurrection. The tower had given up its bells, as the great Russian writer tells us on that last morning the sea will give up its ships which, with all their sails and flags, will crowd the shore. A change has passed over the world, a chasm has divided the old world from the new, since first those bells were cloistered in their tower. The people thronged around, alive with joyful excitement. They felt themselves not disconnected units, but links in the chain of generations. They read the inscriptions, still as clear as if lettered yesterday. They were in touch, one doubts not, with the old donors who had given the bells, the old bell-founders who had cast them, the continuous succession of bands of ringers following one another to this day; they had the sense of quiet chimes upon uncounted Sundays; they heard the peals for Waterloo and Trafalgar. In Brittany or Flanders, a saint of a thousand years ago cures the toothache of to-day. You see the little shrine of St. Appolonia hung with wax models of teeth made sound again. 'It is not unreasonable,' says Sir Thomas More,

'to think that she can do this, whose own teeth were driven in and crushed for Christ's sake.' But the prayers that go up from English villages, and they are many, do not involve this varied contact with the historic past. The one thing in English religion that gives this is the fabric of the Parish Church. 'Isn't it nic't'? said one enthusiast, the village miller and baker, as he examined the bells, the black eyes twinkling with pleasure in his good-humoured face. He then and there registered a resolve that, if at any time it was possible, he would himself give an extra bell in memory of the departed members of his own family. This baker—I assure the reader I am not writing sarcastically—is one of those real lovers of the Church who never attend its services. On Christmas Day he makes amends for his non-attendance by cooking all the dinners in the village free. 'Let 'em send their dinners to me,' he says, 'and then they can all go.' On that great day of charity, the bakehouse oven is filled with geese and rabbit-pies and joints of beef, and after Church the village street is

filled with the savoury steams of the various dinners being transferred to their respective tables. When once the bells were again successfully rehung, the delight expressed was also very great. 'They're right for another two-hundred years,' again and again one heard it said.

A great piety and charity, indeed, apart from specific religious practice, exists in English country people. How real is this often vague and unformulated Christianity, is shown by their patience and resignation under the suffering which they regard as of the essence of the human lot. They have indeed a great appreciation of those good things of life so largely denied them. Asceticism is an ideal with which they have no manner of sympathy. I remember the contempt with which an intelligent villager spoke of Count Tolstoy, of whose living and working as a peasant he had been reading in the newspaper. Another villager, a woman, had one day been using all the resources of language to express her contempt for her neighbour. All the records of her past and

that of her family were most strictly discussed. They were the lowest of the low, she declared. At last, working herself up into a climax, she exclaimed, 'Why her father fasted forty days and forty nights.' As long as the rich do good unto themselves the poor will speak well of them. 'Let them enjoy it as has it,' you so often hear. They enjoy the spectacle of good fortune and happiness as they would a pantomime. But they hold man's normal state to be one of suffering, and either resign themselves to it, or any rate honestly endeavour to do so. It is not a lamentation that steams up from the lips of those who, with enduring toil, perform the labours of the year, but a murmur of acceptance. It is often my lot to chat with an old man who has lost a hand, and who is suffering from heart disease, as he leans over his garden gate. Within the house is a daughter, a comparatively young woman of about forty, dying of an incurable disease. 'I'm forced to bide outside,' he will say, 'it hurts me so to see the poor thing. Good gal she's always been, and worked hard and saved her money,

and all her young days never saw no pleasure much; and now she frets because she never will see pleasure. I tells her "never mind that, my dear; try to think o' something different." And I know she do try; she tries hard, poor dear, I hears her night and mornin'. Last night she fancied a drop o' champagne. So long as I've lived I've never seen champagne, but I shall send for a shillin's-worth this evening. It hurts me cruel, it do, but I drowns it i' 'baccy.'

They go round the sun—Sol, the glorious flaming orb, darting out the fires of light and heat by which they live—Mars and Mercurius, Jupiter and Saturnus, Venus and Terra. In this last point of space, in seeming contradiction with its plenitude of air and light, its freedom and beauty and fruitfulness, there are being lived narrow, burdened lives of men and women, haunted and shadowed by pain. A thread is sometimes found which leads them securely to the heart of the mystery, in the thought of a life like their own in the inaccessible and splendid places. Another sufferer from an incurable disease, a poor old

bed-ridden woman, who has all her life been half-starved, fighting a long fight with a drunken husband and with many children, recently told me the story of a dream she once had, as nearly as possible in the following words: 'I was going home from work in the fields, and I was so shabby and dirty, and as I went along a most beautifully dressed lady overtook me, and said, "We're going the same way; I'll walk with you." I was so ashamed, for I was in rags, but we went on together a long, long way. I didn't know where we were going, but we came at last to a most beautiful place. The lady rang the bell, and we were both let in. "Whatever place is this?" I said; "surely it must be heaven." The lady said, "It's not heaven, it's the outside place, where we have to wait for a time before we're admitted into heaven. You'd better wait here just inside the door." So I sat down, and she walked straight right up to the top. She walked up to where some one was sitting, and I knew at once it was Our Saviour. She walked boldly up and began to talk, oh! so loud and so fast, and

went on telling Him how much she'd done to improve the poor. And Our Saviour didn't answer her one word at all. Then I said to myself, "Oh! whatever shall I do? I never did anyone any good, and my hair's all down, and I *am* so untidy." And I burst out crying. Then Our Saviour came down from the top and left the lady talking, and came down where I was, and put His hand on my shoulder, and said, "When did you ever hear that I despised anyone?"'

II

FOLK LORE AND TRADITION

ON WEATHER LORE

'CHANGEMENT de temps, entretien de sots,' says a French proverb. To me it seems the proverb that is foolish. There is an extraordinary dignity, for instance, in the rustic weather-lore of old-fashioned village people, coming down from days without newspapers, without the modern hurry and bustle, with little knowledge of the outside world, when men's interests were, perforce, centred in the natural operations going on around them, and the great framework in which they were set, which last, as each time the earth went round the sun, was enriched by its association with the events and persons of a supernatural year. How restful are the old saws and proverbs of the weather, now everywhere dying out, once continually on the lips of country people, the garnered wisdom of

centuries of observant toil! These rustic proverbs have been repeated for centuries, and nobody knows how old they are, or who made them. Talking about the weather seems a broadly human recreation, suited to days of a large leisure, like attending funerals, playing old-fashioned whist, or drinking hot elderberry wine.

The story of St. Swithin is a bit of saintly weather-lore still universally known in England. It belongs to a time when everybody knew the dates of the saints' days. The old rhyming weather proverbs still extant speak of Candlemass, of St. Paul, of St. James, of St. Barthlemy. Everyone talked familiarly of these days. In Russia, no doubt, the Moujik still reminds his wife of the severe trouble her slanderous tongue got her into last Three Holy Children, and she retorts by mentioning his fall from a ladder while under the influence of vodka two years come Elias the Prophet. It is well known that in Russia the number of holidays is positively scandalous. The Eastern Church, moreover, commemorates the saints of the Old Law as

well as of the New. Quam magna est domus! In England the memory of saints' days, else forgotten, is still occasionally kept alive by weather rhymes.

The first bit of weather-lore I ever remember to have heard is:

> As the days lengthen
> The cold strengthens,

or, in a version rhyming more correctly:

> As the days begin to lengthen
> Then the cold begins to strengthen,

All January weather rhymes insist on the cold of the lengthening days after Christmas. Keats's picture of that St. Agnes' Eve, when it was 'so bitter chill' that 'the owl for all his feathers was a-cold,' may have been influenced by these old sayings. The Old Style St. Agnes' Eve would be the last day of January. The weather rhymes are all in favour of the early months of the year being cold. If they are not, we shall suffer for it afterwards. There is one that says:

> If the grass grows green in Janiveer,
> It grows the worse for it all the year.

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and another muses :

> March in Janiveer,
> Janiveer in March, I fear ;

'I remember when the old people always called it Janiveer,' an old body told me the other day. 'A warm January a cold May' is to the same effect, and, once more :

> Who doffs his coat on a winter day,
> Will gladly put it on in May.

The first three months of the year are the time when cold weather is expected, and may be cheerfully endured. French proverbs tell the same tale : 'Si février est chaud, Pâques aura froidure,' and again, 'Quand mars fait avril, avril fait mars.' With good luck, the worst of winter may be done with by St. Vincent, but, on the other hand, it may then set in with renewed severity. The old time St. Vincent's Day would be at the beginning of February. 'A la St. Vincent l'hiver se reprend ou se rompt les dents.' The people who made such sayings as this last knew well the deadly grip and bite of winter. It was indeed a wolf at poor men's doors.

According to a rhyme we heard an old lady quote a week or two ago, a prophetic character seems to have been attributed to St. Paul's Day. It runs:

If St. Paul's day be fair and clear,
That betides a happy year.
If blustering winds do blow aloft,
Then wars will trouble us full oft.
And if it chance to snow or rain,
Then will be dear all sorts of grain.

From my window I look out on a great and splendid church. Few things must have so much impressed our forefathers as the sight of such a church, filled from end to end in the frosty February morning with the twinkling lights of Candlemass Day. This feast is one of the great dividing lines in weather lore.

If Candlemass Day be fine and clear,
We shall have winter half the year.
If Candlemass Day be wet and foul,
The half of winter's gone at Yule.

Another adage says:

If the wind's in the East on Candlemass Day,
There it will stick till the second of May.

'February Fill-Dyke,' by the way, always strikes one as a descriptive phrase, beautiful in its acquiescent tranquillity.

'March Many-Weathers,' again, comes from days when everything was personified. March is one of the easiest months to think of as a person: one sees her shaken locks, her brown young brow, her sea-blue eyes. She dances; she is in a red cloak; the laughter of new life is in her whirling gusts. March is the month of wind and sunshine; if she fails to give us these the coming months must pay:

> As many mists in March you see,
> So many frosts in May will be.

The March proverbs are full of the joy of living, and the goodness of her keen, shrill winds. 'A peck of March dust is worth a king's ransom.'

> March winds, April showers,
> Bring forth May flowers.

They delight in her quick changes, her coming in like a lion and going out like a

lamb, her irresponsible gaiety. 'Marzo matto' Tuscans say.

'Lent' means spring, and a Lent proverb may be put down here. It sounds as old as Chaucer:

> If the sun shine on Shrove Tuesday,
> It shines each day in Lent, men say.

The budding of the trees was thought to be an index of the coming year. The following is a very prosaic version of the saying about the oak and the ash, known to every body:

> If the Oak's before the Ash,
> The farmer's pockets are full of cash.
> If the Ash is before the Oak,
> The farmer's hopes will end in smoke.

The good time begins in April, when winter's ruins and rains are over, and all the season of snows and sins. Now it is right to expect sunshine. There is a time for everything under the sun, but frost and cold are unseasonable now, and mean harm. 'Fogs in April, floods in June.' Again, they say in France:

> Gelée d'avril ou de mai
> Misère nous prédit, au vrai.

But when things go well there is no praise too great for the sun and dew of April and of May. 'Rosée de mai vaut chariot de roi.' The folk-lore of all Christian lands, by the way, is full of the sacredness of the rain falling on Ascension Day.

The French equivalents of our St. Swithin are St. Médard and St. Protais. Both of these occur in June, St. Médard on the eighth, St. Protais on the nineteenth :

S'il pleut le jour de St. Médard,
Il pleut quarante jours plus tard,
S'il pleut le jour de St. Protais,
Il pleut quarante jours après.

All over Europe there are sayings which note, with a certain healthy pleasure, the storms of a fine summer, and the times when they may be looked for. 'San Giovanni e San Pietro, gran mercanti di grandine' is from the Italian Lakes. Still, in spite of hail or thunder, 'juin bien fleuri, vrai Paradis.'

In our own West Country they say that the rain on St. Swithin's Day 'christens the apples.' The forty days of rain are from St.

Swithin to St. Bartholomew, July 15th to August 24th. The rhyme tells us :

As many tears as St. Swithin can cry,
St. Barthlemy's mantle shall wipe them dry.

Long days of hot sunshine with brief thunderstorms are looked for from a well-conducted July. 'Juillet ensoleilée et en grand tonnere remplit cave et grenier.' Another saying is :

If the first of July be rainy weather,
It will rain more or less for four weeks together.

The fate of the year is not decided till late in July :

Till St. James's Day be past and gone,
There may be hope or there may be none.

St. Bartholomew, again, is a decisive date :

If St. Barthlemy's Day be fair and clear
Hope for a prosperous autumn that year.

A French August proverb says :

Quand il pleut en Août,
Il pleut miel et bon mout.

After harvest, the weather proverbs become few and far between. The peasant's interest

in the year is practical, not æsthetic, and when once all is safely gathered in he has no longer the same motive for watching the weather and its changes. There is always the same dislike to unseasonable things. So we hear :

Winter thunder,
Poor man's hunger.

or, again :

If there's ice in November to carry a duck,
There'll be nothing after but sludge and muck.

or, once more :

A green Christmas, a white Easter.

For the peasant holds that there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven, and that of its kind and in its season everything is good.

ON SACRED TREES

In a recent number of Mrs. Maude Egerton King's excellent little magazine, *The Vineyard*, there is a charming illustration to a story contributed by the Editor herself. The picture represents a Christmas tree. In the centre is the radiant Christ-child, and around, above, and below, are the ox and the ass, the sheep, the crowing cock, and all the other legendary animals of the nativity. The thick green boughs are hung with candles, and stars, and crosses, and little burning hearts. The trunk of the tree itself springs from a heart of fire. The little burning bush set the writer thinking of all sacred trees.

Dante, let us say, laurel-wreathed and solemn, stands in the forefront of his world. To the left is the mouth of the dark cavern,

and above, Paradise is indicated by the host of luminous stars, for

In cielo ogni dove è Paradiso.

But over him rises the purgatorial Mountain, which the contented spirits ascend, as they journey up to join the blessed people. At its summit, ringed round with the last keen river of flame, is the still flourishing garden of the Earthly Paradise, 'la divina foresta spessa e viva' from the centre of which rises the sacred tree. This is the tree which the Christian mythologists say was born with the world in the Earthly Paradise, and which will re-appear at the Last Judgment. With it all man's fortunes are intertwined. We may look upon this tree as humanity itself. For, as all doctors say, 'Ubi Crux, ibi martyr.' 'He is that Cross,' says an old English writer, 'to which we pray and sing, "Ave, Crux, Spes Unica."' It will be remembered how amid solemn hymns and the joy of blessed spirits, 'danzando il loro angelico carribo,' Dante saw the tree, which had so long been despoiled and bare, clothe itself with foliage, and blossom anew.

The sacredness of this tree all trees share and shadow forth. The ancient people saw 'every common bush a-fire with God.' To them a tree was not 'mere firewood.' In Ur of the Chaldees, from which Abraham fled, there was a great and sacred tree, hung all over with bright images of gods, and signs of the sun, and moon, and stars of heaven. He taught that 'there was but One God, the Creator of the Universe, and that, as to other gods, if they contributed anything to the happiness of men, each of them afforded it only according to His appointment, and not by their own power. This, his opinion,' says Josephus, 'was derived from the irregular phenomena that were visible both at land and sea, as well as those that happen to the sun and moon, and all the heavenly bodies . . . Since they do not preserve regularity, they make it plain that in so far as they co-operate to our advantage they do it not of their own ability, but as subservient to Him who commands them: to whom alone we ought justly to offer honour and thanksgiving. For which doctrines the

Chaldeans and other peoples of Mesopotamia raised a tumult against him.' . . . But the trysting place of the one God with man was still 'at the Bush.' Josephus again says: 'Here it was that a wonderful prodigy happened to Moses; for a fire fed upon a thorn bush, yet did the green leaves and the flowers continue untouched, and the fire did not at all consume the fruit branches, though the flames were great and high.' In France, by the way, the pink hawthorn is called 'l'Arbre de Moïse,' or 'le buisson ardent.'

Although all trees are sacred, the instinct of the human race has divined in certain of them a symbolical and sacramental character. Such are the palm, the olive, and above all, the vine. This last is no doubt the world's most sacred tree. Its fruit yields the 'Mysterium Fidei.' The reader will not need to be reminded of Fra Ugo Bassi's 'Sermon' in 'The Disciples.' The true tradition is that the yule log must be the trunk of a fruit tree. From the beginning certain trees have ministered peculiarly to the heirs of immortality. When Adam and Eve, as in the

mystery plays, 'put off their solemn garments, Adam his red tunic, Eve her robe of white with a white silk cloak,' the poor raiment they put on was 'sewn together of fig leaves.' (Talking of Adam and Eve, I came the other day, in a little country church, upon an extraordinary font, the work of a local stonemason of the early eighteenth century. Our first parents stood one on either side of the trunk of the tree, of which the bowl of the font was formed. The sculptured figures were curiously living. The font was not used, but had been recently rescued from a stable to which it had been consigned by a former vicar, to make room for a piece of stone work from the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, lifeless and conventional to the last degree. It had been placed in the Church again, as a curiosity in a Museum. The vicar's idea had been that it was irreverent, and might make people laugh. The landlady at the Inn could give very little account of it. 'An old trough,' she said, 'I believe at one time it was connected together for a font').

But to return to the trees. For the

Christian mythologist the 'una arbor nobilis' is, of course, the Cross. This was formed of the sacred trees of the world, the palm, the cypress, the cedar, the olive. 'In Cruce fit palma, cedrus, cypressus, oliva.'

Nailed were His Feet to cedar, to palm His Hands,
Cypress His Body bore, Title on Olive stands.

The Ark, the type of the true 'Arca mundo naufrago,' was of cypress. As to the olive, one need not refer to the olive branches borne as messages of peace. The olive leaf plucked off and borne back by the dove at evening is the most touching and beautiful token in the history of the world. It is fitting that a tablet of olive wood should bear the Name of peace. I never remember seeing it in the books, but it was surely of olive wood that the 'Pax,' the symbol of peace and reconcilation kissed by all in the Mass, should have been made. The olive is never stripped of her leaves; the green olive tree stands in the House of God; her trust is for ever and ever. Green is the colour of hope, and so in Dante, the Guardian Angels

of the Purgatorio, the place of hope, are vested in green :—

> Verdi, come fogliette pur mo nate,
> Erano in veste, che da verdi penne
> Percosse traean dietro, e ventilate. (Purg. viii. 28)

But the mystical allegories of the wood of the Holy Cross are endless. It was the 'dry tree' that had been made to blossom and bear fruit, the lowly tree that had been exalted; 'et scient omnia ligna regionis quia ego Dominus humiliavi lignum sublime, et exaltavi lignum humile et sicavi lignum verde, et frondere feci lignum aridum, Ego Dominus locutus sum et feci' (Ezekiel xvii. 24). The verse of the Psalm 'Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King' in Justin Martyr's time ran, 'Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord hath reigned from the tree,' and in this form it has passed into the offices of the Church. 'Dicite in gentibus quia Dominus regnavit a ligno.' It is well known that in all crucifixes earlier than the eleventh century the Figure is robed and crowned. Very impressive is this representation on the rood-screen in the little Norman

Chapel by the river bank at Quimper. In the Crucifix of cedar-wood, known as the 'Volto Santo,' said to have been carved by Nicodemus, which has been kept in the Cathedral of Lucca since 782, the Head is crowned. By the way, the Rood should hang exactly in the middle of the Church, 'the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden.' 'Blessed is the Wood by which righteousness cometh' runs the antiphon 'for Death died upon the Tree when the Life died, Alleluia.'

Ex hoc signo Crucis,
Ex hoc ligno Crucis,
Venit pœnitenti
Et contrita menti,
Flos virtutis,
Fons salutis.

Ernest Hello writes, 'Les choses chrétiennes trouvent toujours dans les traditions de l'humanité des profonds échos qui s'éveillent quand on les touche. Ainsi une sibylle s'écriat autrefois "O bois triomphant!"' To quote only one example of the popular Christian poetry of the Cross, here are some Italian dialect verses :

Dio ti salva, santa Croce,
  Arboro d'amor plantato,
Che portasti lo Fructo si dolce
  E lo mondo a salvato.
Su lo alto dello mare,
  Un arbore è apparito,
Che di rose e di viole
  Tutto quanto è fiorito.

The cross of Church tradition is of cedar, of cypress, of palm, and of olive, but the cross of the popular fancy is everywhere made of some homely tree. It is often said to be the aspen, which for that reason trembles evermore. The mistletoe, says another story, was once a great forest tree, but when it gave its wood for this awful purpose, it was cursed and degraded into a parasite. In the old English carol we read—

Go down, go down to yonder town
And sit in the gallery,
And there you'll see sweet Jesus Christ
Nailed to a big yew tree.

The trees vary with the countries, just as the Mother Juliana of Norwich (no doubt remembering the spring winds of the East Coast) says that on Good Friday 'it was a

dry hard wind, and wondrous cold,' while Italian writers speak of 'un gran vento caldo e pesante.'

It is well known that neither in Brittany nor Ireland will the people eat the blackberries which in both countries flourish so luxuriantly, because of the bramble was made the Crown of thorns. Yet in the Christian mythology, for this very reason, the bramble is a sacred tree. It is said that on the Cross the Old Testament parable was fulfilled. 'The trees went forth on a time to anoint a King over them, and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said, Should I leave my fatness whereby by me they honour God and Man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the fig tree, Come thou and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine that cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over

the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye will anoint me to be king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow, if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.' (Judges vi.) This little story is full of the old-world feeling of the sacredness of trees and of their being mysterious meeting-places between God and man. In many parts of England, by the way, the country people call the Cross surrounded by the implements of the Passion, which they buy from some wandering pedlar, a 'Jacob's ladder.'

Trees figure constantly in the sacred history of mankind; they have witnessed his love, his worship, his anguish, his fear. It was beneath a tree that Abraham, who had confessed the One, saw the Three, when he entertained the angels in the field at Mamre. It was beneath a juniper tree that Elijah, according to the tradition, trembled with an unheard-of fear, a fear beyond all fear that ever was, an excess of terror that called down

for him the chariot of fire, a terror so great that he prayed for the death he fled from. It was beneath an ivy bush (according to the Septuagint) that Jonah was exceedingly glad, and was delivered from his grief.

All the trees of the wood rejoice with man in his mysterious triumphs; they clap their hands, the fir tree, the myrtle, and the box together. The holy thorn blossoms at Glastonbury on the great Night, just as, at the first Christmas, the vines in Solomon's garden at Engaddi burst into leaf and flower and fruit. The peach tree at the gate of Heliopolis broke into blossom when a little Child was carried through it by two fugitives fleeing from Judea into Egypt.

The trees of Christmas are, of course, the evergreens. The fir tree is the Christmas tree, par excellence, Chaucer calls Our Lady 'Benigne branch of the fir tree.' The laurel, which he kissed because it was Apollo's sign, is the badge of the triumph of poet and Cæsar. Of the sweet lore of the holly, one need not speak. There can be no more delightful sight than a holly bush loaded with

its red glowing berries. In Cornwall it is called 'Aunt Mary's tree.' It is so much a part of the season that old-fashioned people still call it 'Christmas,' just as it is called 'Calendau' in Provence. The old carol associates it with all glad things:

> Oh! the rising of the sun,
> The running of the deer,
> The playing of the merry organ,
> The chanting of the quire.

Another old English carol contrasts the holly and the ivy, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter:—

> Holly stands in the hall, fair to behold,
> Ivy stands without the door, she is sore a-cold,
> Holly his merry men they dance and they sing,
> Ivy her maidens they weep and they wring.

Yet, among the ancients, ivy also was a festive plant and was sacred to Bacchus.

The distinction between a symbol and a mere figure or emblem is well known. A figure is an arbitary representation; a symbol is the thing or person represented. It is seen under a visible aspect. Such a symbol of humanity is the 'Tree of Jesse.' At

Joigny there is a house where the beams of the exterior woodwork blossom with Kings and Prophets. Can one imagine a better decoration for a house than this image of noble and fruitful human life with its supernatural crown? The tree springing from the loins of Jesse as he lies asleep is peopled in every branch by the ancestors of the Christ, and crowned with the Mother and Child. In the tree called 'l'Arbre de la Nouvelle Alliance,' which one sometimes sees in France, the branches are crowded with the announcing heralds and prophets, and the crowning figure is the Saviour Himself. In either tree a principal person is David chanting the great Mystery to his harp. In a remote Breton village which I saw last summer, the tree that rises from the recumbent sleeper is the Crucifix with the whole scene of Calvary. The sleeper is crowned, and so the guide book calls him David, but this was no doubt a mistake of the village people who in 1560 made this Calvary 'par dévotion.' These simple souls believed that the great Tree of Humanity, which with all its

branches struggles up towards heaven, which shelters so many prophets and singers, which after all storms ever clothes itself with the green of a fresh hope, and of which the fruit is a loving, suffering Man, is no chance birth of time, but 'natus ex Parentis Corde' is rooted in a Heart.

ON SACRED DANCES

THE following lines are an almost literal rendering of a little bit of folk-song from French Flanders. They were sung to the accompaniment of peculiar ceremonies at the funeral of a young girl:

Up in heaven they dance to-day,
Alleluia,
The young maidens dance and play,
They sing as they dancing go,
Benedicamus Domino,
Alleluia, Alleluia.

'Tis for Rosalie they sing,
Alleluia,
She has done with sorrowing,
So we dance, and we sing so,
Benedicamus Domino,
Alleluia, Alleluia.

This was called 'La Danse des Jeunes Vierges.' So late as 1840, a traveller heard

it sung by the lace-makers of Bailleul. He wrote:—

> La cérémonie religieuse terminée, et le cercueil descendu en terre, toutes les jeunes filles, tenant d'une main le drap mortuaire, rétournerent à l'église, chantant la Danse des Jeunes Vierges, avec une verve, un élan, et un accent rhythmique, dont on peut se faire difficilement un idée, quand on ne l'a pas entendu.

'Alleluia' is, of course, the song of home-coming. 'Alleluiare' is Dante's beautiful verb. He speaks of the Blessed at the Resurrection,

> La rivestita voce alleluiando. (Purg. xxx., 15.)

The point, however, we wish to notice in this fragment of folk-song is the preservation of the ancient expression of religious joy by the image of a dance. There is no idea of motion allied to the endless music of the present conventional heaven. The popular hymns speak of it as a banquet, a feast, as anything you like, but never as a dance. But yet what simile for blessedness can be compared with that of joyful motion? It is only since the sixteenth-

century break with the inherited religious experience of mankind that the dance has been looked upon as profane, and unfitted to be the expression of worship and sacred joy. For instance, let us take Dante. A commentator describes the 'dance' 'as the rythmic movement which Dante attributes to the Blessed as the index of their felicity.' The reader will remember how, after the poet had been plunged into the water of Lethe to the strains of the 'Asperges me,' his Lady introduced him into the earthly Paradise

> Dentro alla danza delle quattro belle. (Purg. xxx., 103.)

—her four handmaidens, who were nymphs and stars in heaven. Again, the spirits whom he heard chanting the heavenly Sanctus, while they sang

> Mossero a sua danza,
> E, quasi velocissime faville
> Mi si velar di subita distanza. (Par. vii., 7.)

Once more, he describes the 'carols' woven by the heavenly dancers. They danced in

such various measure that some seemed to stand still and some to fly (Par. xxiv.). The word 'carol,' which Dante uses repeatedly, means, of course, a singing dance. Even in the restricted sense in which we now use the word, a carol is the purest expression of religious mirth and blitheness. In the Middle Ages, the angels of Christmas, for instance, as we may see in Fra Angelico's or Botticelli's pictures, not only sang, but danced. This came down from all tradition, Pagan, Christian, Jewish, and seemed to be, as indeed it is, the most natural thing in the world. To show that this dancing of Fra Angelico's blessed souls or Dante's angels was no mere private fancy of their own, one need only mention the Preface of a Syrian liturgy, where the 'dances of the Virtues' are introduced as a matter of course among the songs of the angels and all those other adorations of the Heavenly Host of which the Prefaces of all Liturgies speak. The ancient world knew little of music apart from joyful, rhythmic motion, and did not banish the latter from its sacred solemnities. We

have travelled so far away from this age-long religious sense of the whole race that one hestitates to mention the tradition, supported by an apocryphal gospel, that our Lord and His disciples joined hands and danced in a ring at the Last Supper. To the Early Christians and to the whole ancient world there would have been nothing incongruous or profane in the thought. By those who first heard the story of the Prodigal Son, the 'joy in the presence of the Angels' over the return of the penitent would, no doubt, be thought of as of a piece with the 'music and dancing' that welcomed his return on earth. It is hardly necessary to refer to the Psalms. 'Let them praise His name in the dance; let them sing praises unto Him with tabret and harp,' and again, 'Praise Him with the cymbals and dances; praise Him upon the strings and pipe' (Ps. cxlix.-3 and cl.-4). David himself, girded with a linen ephod, 'danced before the Lord with all his might, leaping and dancing before the Ark' (II. Sam. 6). 'How glorious was the King of Israel this day,'

said the scornful Michal, who had watched him from her window. He answered that the Lord had made him ruler over His people; 'therefore will I play before the Lord.' David, the dancer and singer and harper, was the 'Joculator Domini.' This dance of his was a true carol—Dante's 'carola.' It is pleasant to think that even the carols which we know to-day, all, so to speak, spring from and belong to Bethlehem, David's town, where David was. To large sections of our own people 'psalm-singing'—'psalm-smiting,' we believe, is the opprobrious phrase—has come to be looked upon as a synonym for long-faced melancholy. But the Psalms are not tame. In a great Psalm of David there are trumpets and tambourines; 'stellæ et lumen,' there are stars and light; there are dark storm-clouds, 'nix et grando,' in the sullen masses of their angry blue. Long before David, we hear of a triumphant night, when 'Miriam took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances' (Ex. xv.-20). 'To play before the Lord'—how natural the idea

must have seemed to simple-hearted, primitive religious people. In a strenuous, irreligious age, there is no place for the 'jongleur de Dieu.'

A few precious remnants of the old-world sacred merriment still exist in remote parts of Europe, but they are few and far between. The Spanish writer, Fernan Caballero, in one of her books describes a dance of children, in which, at every pause, they click the castanets before the image of the Divine Child with a devout exclamation. The dance of the Seises, also with castanets, is still performed on Christmas Day and Corpus Christi by the chorister boys before the High Altar of the Cathedral of Seville. The boys are dressed as pages of the time of Philip II. The above-named writer describes it as the most thrilling and touching sight it is possible to imagine. Let us hope that no reforming Pope, or rigid official clique, will ever sweep it away. If we are not mistaken, several attempts to do so have been made. The most ultra-montane Clericals often appear to desire to puritanise and rationalise the great

tradition into a religion of conventional propriety. A dancing procession takes place every year near Grenoble to commemorate the simultaneous recovery of all the invalids in the town during a procession in the sixteenth century. One sees the scene; the arrival of the joyful news, the benign and portly father clapping his hands, and saying: 'Qu'on danse,' the sudden striking up of flutes and fiddles, and the spontaneous outburst into joyful agitation. In the sixteenth century this would still seem a carrying-out of the apostle's advice: 'Is any man merry? let him sing psalms.'

As in Dante's heaven, so in the world we know, 'rhythmic motion' is always the expression of joy. One must not talk of the flight of birds; indeed, one cannot do so. One is dumb before a swallow's flight; but is there anything in the world that gives a sensation of ecstasy like it? Or what shall we say of the fluttering of a red admiral butterfly over a clump of flowering autumn daisies, that sways and rustles in a silken west wind? Dante's image of the liberated

soul, or, one should rather say, of the glorified human being, is the 'angelica farfalla.' Again, who has not watched the dance of the snow-flakes, of upward flying sparks, of thistledown, of straws in gusty weather? The dancing of flowers is, in its way, as beautiful as the flight of birds. All that can be said has been said of this by Wordsworth in the poem of the daffodils. With some measure of his feeling, I saw recently an acre of snowdrops growing in green grass, every tiny bell a-quiver in the March wind. 'They're very marvellous,' said a little meek-faced man, 'and very pretty.' The poet and the writer and the little meek-faced man all felt in their degree the same emotion. One may very reasonably think the beautiful ancient myth of the moving, singing spheres to be true. The whole universe would thus perform a carol. This may be religiously thought of as the repetition of a sacred dance, of which the convolutions are reflected in the strange and graceful forms of creatures—the owl, the tortoise, the squirrel, the swan, the deer, the peacock, the giraffe—the colour and expanse

of skies and seas, the motion and the calm of wind and air, the rhythmic flight of birds and beat of waves, all the dancing play of the Divine Wisdom, 'ludens coram Eo,' now kissing a hand, now tossing a flower, making the movements that are caught by falling water and by leaping flame, by sea-gull, and by butterfly and swallow, 'per singulos dies' with changing shapes of beauty day by day, in a dance of infinite variations through unnumbered years.

ON PILGRIM SHRINES

I REMEMBER a ballad of Dr. Neale's which, when I was a boy of sixteen, used to thrill my very soul. It began :—

Oh! the good old times of England, ere, in her evil day,
From her ancient faith and her holy rites her people fell away,
When her gentlemen had hands to give, and her yeomen hearts to feel,
And they raised full many a bede-house, but never a Bastille.

Mr. Arnold Bennett reminds us, by the way, that 'Bastille' is still used as a name for the workhouse in parts of the Midlands and the North of England. The ballad proceeds to denounce the Poor Law system in no measured terms :—

We shut them up from tree and flower, and from the blessed sun ;

We tear in twain the hearts that God in wedlock has made one!

With great vehemence it goes on to the description of a pauper funeral :—

And the corpse is thrown into the ground, when the prayers are hurried o'er,
To rest in peace a little while, and then make room for more.

The ballad-singer exhibits in contrast with all this the lot of the poor of Christ in the Ages of Faith, and deplores the horrors of the Reformation. 'We mourn not for our Abbey lands,' he says, but for the wasted shrines and scattered relics of the Saints.

But two, at least, in their holy shrines, escaped the tyrant's hand,
And Saint Cuthbert and Saint Edward might alone redeem the land.

From this happy augury he goes on to pray for and predict in language which must have been extremely irritating to the Tory land-owners and Radical manufacturers of that day—say, 1852—the total downfall of the wordly wealth and prosperity of England. It will melt away he says, 'like wax before the flame.'

Then shalt thou find thy truest strength thy martyrs' prayers above,
Then shalt thou find thy truest wealth their holy deeds of love.

Then the ruined choirs will be built up again :—

And Tierce and Nones and Matins shall have each their holy lay,
And the Angelus at Compline shall sweetly close the day.

The workhouse, indeed, is far from pilgrim shrines, though it is often the end of pilgrimage, the last hostel where the wayfarer lays down staff and scallop-shell for ever. But I have dwelt upon this ballad, both because of the extraordinary effect it produced upon my own mind, and also because, setting out to write something about pilgrimages, it seems most fitting to begin with some sort of invocation of Dr. Neale. I was reminded of him by looking literally at the first page, the paper pasted into the cover of Mr. Sidney Heath's fascinating volume on 'Pilgrim Life in the Middle Ages,' just published by Mr. Fisher Unwin. This is a 'Map Indicating

the more Prominent Shrines to which Pilgrimages were made in England.' In this map England stands decked in her 'white robe of churches,' an Island of Saints. There are St. Cuthbert at Durham, and St. Edward at Westminster, no longer alone, but part of a great company. There are St. Hugh at Lincoln, and St. William at York, and St. Alban in his great Abbey, and St. Swithin at Winchester. There are Glastonbury of the Holy Thorn, and Our Lady of Walsingham, and the Rood of Grace at Boxley. There are the shrines of the two murdered Royal Edwards at Shaftesbury and at Gloucester. The devotional life of the Middle Ages was often influenced and inspired by human sympathy, and the cultus of the saints did not wholly depend on official canonisation. Popular veneration for all sorts of human valour and virtue, or indeed pity for human misfortune, took this devotional form, as in the old English veneration for Simon de Montfort and Duke Thomas of Lancaster. The saints of the people's worship were by no means all of the 'bundle-of-bones' type

of official sancity, Above all, of course, there is the great Saint Thomas at Canterbury. (In a 'Poor Robin's Almanac,' of the year, 1803, by the way, which lies on my table as I write, July 7th is marked 'Thomas à Becket.' This, of course, is the day of his Translation, not the martyrdom on December 29th. This almanac also has noted Corpus Christi, All Souls' Day, and the Assumption. Was there any popular remembrance of these days existing at the beginning of the last century?)

Well, here in the map lies England, the precious stone set in the silver sea, which last in the picture is being crossed by ships presumably bringing pilgrims from the Continent to English shrines, or carrying English pilgrims faring forth to Spain, or Rome, or the Holy Land. Mr. Heath says, 'An English traveller in the fourteenth century relates that he saw lying in the harbour of Corunna, eighty shiploads of pilgrims, of which thirty were from England.' There was a much greater international feeling existing in the Middle Ages than in later

times. England had not then been isolated, islanded indeed, by the schism and the long French wars. In recent times it has been the work of Mr. Cook, of Leicester, in some measure to break down this isolation, which must have reached its height in the first quarter of the last century. This map of the English shrines set me thinking of what has long been a favourite fancy of my own, that of a map of Christendom, with all the shrines and holy places. Dr. Neale, no doubt, knew the Church; it was all mapped out in his brain, with its varieties of rite and custom, its local legends and traditions. Christendom stretched out before him; its roads traversed by pilgrim bands hastening on to beckoning towers. It lived in his mind with a life of its own; its atmosphere was filled with fervent ejaculations and acts of contrition. But for more ordinary Christians a map of the holy places of Christendom would be a very desirable thing.

Here, on the Mount of Olives, is the imprint of the Blessed Feet left on the day Our Lord went up, when they watched the

Figure growing smaller and smaller like a disappearing ship, when He 'pierced the heavens'—*penetravit cœlos*, the seven spheres —*ærum, ætherum, olimpeum, igneum, siderum, crystallinum, empyreum.* Here is the little Church of Quo Vadis Domine on the Appian Way, on the spot where St. Peter, fleeing from the city, met the Saviour bearing His Cross with His face set steadfastly to go to Rome. 'Quo vadis, Domine?' 'Vado Romam iterum crucifigi,' Here at Les Saintes Maries in the Camargue is where Mary Cleopas and Mary Salome rested when, after the Ascension, they were put into a boat without tackle or rudder, with Lazarus and Mary Magdalene, and Restitutus, the man born blind, and Maximinus, one of the Seventy, and Sara, their little gipsy servant-girl. To this day the gipsies burn endless candles at Sara's shrine. Here at the top of the mountains is the cave to which Mary Magdalene pressed on, and in which she spent her remaining days, La Sainte Baume. Here, in the Corrèze is the natural cell in the rock to which Zaccheus the publican brought

an image of Our Lady, carved by St. Luke, in which he died, and was buried in the year 70. Here at Arles is the Chapel of La Genouillade, in Les Aliscamps, where St. Trophimus saw the Vision of the Saviour kneeling among the tombs of the Pagan burial place, and blessing the ground as the resting-place of the Christian dead. So coveted was this resting-place, that bodies of the saints from distant lands of their own accord came floating down the Rhone to Arles. Here at Cologne is the great shrine of the Three Holy Kings. The seamless coat, woven for the Child by His Mother's hands, and which grew with his growth, is at Trêves. Another tunic is at Argenteuil. The relics of the Passion are everywhere. The winding-sheet is at Turin; again, there is a Saint-Suaire at Cadouin. There is a curious relic at Carpentras—'le Saint-Mors.' This at first suggests a dreadful Méridional cruelty of imagination; it is well known that many details of the Passion, known to popular devotion, have their origin in 'revelations' like those of St. Bridget, St.

Gertrude, St. Mechtilde, or Southern saints like Battista Varani. 'It is probable, however, that this is claimed to be the bit made by Constantine from one of the nails of the Cross. A little phial of the Sacred Blood is preserved at Bruges.

But the catalogue is endless. With what thoughts and hopes did the throngs of mediæval pilgrims go to see these things? All Christians went at some time or other of their lives, or at any rate 'longed to go on pilgrimage.' The Palmers passed their whole lives in going from one to another of these holy shrines. It was their vow and profession, they were literally strangers and pilgrims on the earth. It seems to us that all modern writers fail to grasp the real strength of the devotional instinct and feeling in the custom of pilgrimage. They dwell on the pleasure of novelty and excitement, the superstitious hope of bodily healing, the great gains accruing to the guardians of the holy places. There was, no doubt, a very human side to it. A pilgrimage must often have been a delightful holiday. What would one

give to get back into the fourteenth century for a day and hear the bells of Thomas come ringing down the Kentish lanes! 'They have with them men and women who sing wanton songs,' says a bitter Lollard opponent; 'and some other pilgrims will have with them bag-pipes, so that every town they come through, what with the noise of their singing and the sound of their piping and the jingling of their Canterbury bells, and with the barking out of dogs after them, they make more noise than if the King came that way with all his clarions and minstrels.' What a cheery picture of a healthy joy in living! But this was not all. The practice had a great rationale behind it. Dr. Neale says that a third of the names on the martyr-roll of the whole Church are those of victims of the Iconoclastic Persecution. He maintains, of course, that the cause of the icons was purely and simply that of the Incarnation. We may quote Dante for a true description of a good pilgrim's feeling in his day. He says of himself in Paradise:

Quale è colui, che forse di Croazia
Viene a veder la Veronica nostra,

Che per l'antica fama non si sazia,
Ma dice nel pensier, fin che si mostra
Signor mio Gesù Cristo, Dio verace,
Or fu si fatta la sembianza vostra?
(Par. xxii., 103-104.)

'I could never tire of being in this chamber,' writes a fifteenth-century pilgrim to the holy house at Loretto; 'we thought how the Blessed Jesus when he was learning to walk leaned against the walls, and touched them with our rosaries again and again.' Russian pilgrims to this very day do, indeed, as Dr. Neale says, 'weep and pray by that most holy tomb.' They bring coarse linen clothes from the heart of Russia, which they lay out on the stone where the Sacred Body was laid to be anointed, and take them home to wear as their own shrouds.

There was, and is, again, the hope of healing. Mr. Heath tells a charming little story of Rahere, the jester, the founder of St. Bartholomew's Hospital. A woman was brought to him with her tongue so swollen that she could not close her mouth:

And he, revolving his relics he had of the Cross, dipped them in water, and washed the tongue of

the patient therewith and with the Tree of Life, that is, with that same sign of the Cross, on that same tongue. And in the same hour all the swelling went his way, and the woman, glad and whole, went home to her own.

There seems to us a simplicity and a sincerity and a joy in this little story such as one finds in Dr. Neale, and indeed in the Gospels. Mount Calvary was the centre of the world; the Tree of Life was in the midst of the Garden, and for all its sorrows the earth was still Paradise.

There was license enough, superstition enough, imposture enough, no doubt, but something passed away from the human mind with the passing of all that world of worship and devotion.

> I am a poor, unlettered man,
> I pray and worship all I can,

says Mr. Nevinson in a beautiful little poem. To the early Christian and to the mediæval pilgrim the shrines were literally 'the beds' of the Saints. A 'cemetery,' a 'sleeping-place,' is a Christian name for a graveyard. St. Chrysostom preached a sermon on the

word. In the Mass of the Feast of the Holy Relics the Gospel is that of the Resurrection: 'For they that are accounted worthy to attain that world and the Resurrection of the dead are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the Resurrection.' To the faith undoubting of those old wayfarers, St. Mark rested gloriously at Venice, and St. Peter at Rome, and St. Andrew at Amalfi; but the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was the Church of an empty tomb.

THE LORE OF THE THREE KINGS

A GREAT deal of history may be learned from the signs of inns. Anything which stirs the general imagination, a scene of sacred story which appeals to the popular mind, a personage or event or discovery which leaves a mark upon the time will be sure to be kept in remembrance in this way. I think the history of England could be constructed from these signs, from the old 'George and Dragons' and 'Saracen's Heads' to the 'Nelsons' and 'Locomotives' of more recent times. Of the old sacred signs, however, which must have been so common in the Middle Ages, very few remain. The only saints I ever remember seeing on an inn sign are Crispin and Crispinian on the hostelry of that name at Strood. In a Lincolnshire village I recently

came across 'The Jolly Crispin,' a sign evidently dating from days when 'Crispin' was understood by everybody as synonymous with 'shoemaker.' The 'Salutation,' indeed, is still common, and again the 'Angel,' but these are almost the sole survivors of the old religious signs. For the most part they have gone, and with the rest the sign of 'The Three Kings.' It is possible that 'The Three Crowns,' which is still sometimes seen, may refer to the Adoration of the Magi.

It may be questioned, indeed, if there was ever any great popular devotion to them in England. The countries of the 'Three Kings' are Spain and Italy and Southern France, and all German-speaking lands, especially the Tyrol, and as is natural, more particularly the Rhineland. As everybody knows, their popular mediæval name was 'The Three Kings of Cologne.' They were to Cologne what St. Thomas was to Canterbury. In all these countries the common name for the Epiphany feast is 'The Kings.' In Spain, for instance, it is 'Los Reyes.' It would seem that there could be no more

fitting sign for a guest-house, an inn of the high road, than that of these first of pilgrims, these most august of travellers. In France the 'Hôtel des Rois' is a very common sign. Still more common is 'The Three Holy Kings' in Germany. They would seem the fitting and natural patrons and protectors of all the high roads of the world. Lesser travellers, the pilgrim or the palmer, the student on his *wanderjahr*, the packman, the puppet showman, the wandering musician, the itinerant professor of some small trade like the chair-mender or the scissor-grinder, nay the 'traveller' *par excellence*, denominated by a contemptuous world the 'tramp,' might well lay themselves down in peace and take their rest under the shadow of these august protectors. They made all travellers sacred, and all journeys glorious.

As the other scenes of the Sacred Drama are conceived by the popular fancy as being perpetually enacted, so this glorious calvacade still rides the roads of the world. The Provençal poet, Fédéri Mistral, in his charming autobiography, tells how as a boy

he went out, with other children, every sixth of January, 'to look for the Three Kings.' In the Midi, children are thus sent out to meet the pompous train which will come riding into the town, and they carry with them presents, cakes for the Kings, dried figs for the pages, and hay for the camels. As evening falls, and it becomes clear that the procession must have come into the town by some other way, no doubt there is consolation found in the cakes and figs, and the faith of childhood is not too seriously shaken. At Alcoy in Valencia the Kings do ride into the town laden with presents, and the inhabitants all go out to meet them.

No doubt, from its very contrast with the poverty and bareness of the scenes amid which it is set, this glittering calvacade has always exercised an immense fascination. In the popular fancy the Kings are bedizened with all the splendours of the East.

> Their robes were of crimson silk, with rows
> Of bells and pomegranates and furbelows,
> And their turbans like blossoming almond trees.

Everything about them is gorgeous, as they

flash on the homely Western lands, like a flight of tropical birds over misty meadows beneath low grey skies. In the old days nothing could be too bright for the Three Kings. In France gay painted candles were offered to them—hence the proverbial expression, 'bariolé comme une chandelle des Rois.' Everybody knows their names—Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. It is a curious fact that these have never become common Christian names in England, as they have been, and still are, all over Europe. In our own country they have always been exotic—even 'Jasper,' the English form of Caspar, has never been popular. In Italy it is a common practice on the Epiphany to chalk up these names on the walls of churches and houses—Gaspare, Melchiorre, Baldassare. This is done with chalk which has first been blessed in church. This custom was probably once universal, and is perhaps the origin of a phrase to be found in old French writers, notably, if I mistake not, in Montaigne—'this is a day to be marked with blessed chalk.' In Germany, again, it was a common practice

to inscribe their names or initials upon the doorposts of houses. A massive gold ring of the time of Henry VI, dug up at Coventry, supposed to have been made as an amulet against the plague, has, in addition to representations of the Resurrection and the Five Wounds, the names inscribed, 'Jasper, Melchior, Balthazar.'

Caspar was King of Tarsus, and at the time of his journey was twenty years old; Melchior was King of Arabia, and was sixty years old; Balthazar was King of Saba, and was forty years old. The idea is, no doubt, that they are representative of all races of men and all stages of human life. The third King is always a negro. They are the children of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, the three Archfathers of the human race. Indeed, according to one legend, they were Shem, Ham, and Japhet in person, raised from the dead to adore the new-born Child. This is an Armenian myth, and has been put into verse by R. S. Hawker, of Morwenstow:

Three ancient men in Bethlehem's cave
With awful wonder stand;

A voice has called them from their grave
In some far Eastern land.

They lived, they trod the former earth
When the old waters swelled;
The Ark, that womb of second birth,
Their house and lineage held.

Pale Japhet bows the knee with gold,
Bright Sem sweet incense brings,
And Cham, the myrrh his fingers hold.
Lo! the three Orient kings.

Round this cradle the severed brethren, the children of blessing and cursing, meet and are reconciled.

The Golden Legend says that 'they came from the end of Persia.' A jarring note is introduced when, as sometimes in modern children's books, they are seen riding on elephants. The beasts on which they rode were, no doubt, camels, or, as St. Jerome says, dromedaries. They came from a nearer East than India—Arabia and Saba, Persia and the Desert.

These seekers after God rode westward; their faces were towards Europe. Their backs were turned to all the phantasmagoria of Hindu Pantheism; they could never have

lost themselves in its reveries. They were of those fire worshippers from whom Mohammed made his converts. In the white sunshine ripening grapes and figs, in the track of the Milky Way across the heavens at night, in the great fire of piled-up logs, each pierced with myriads of tiny tongues of flame, they saw the bright Image of the Invisible Creator, and so 'by light their way to Light they trod.' It seems but justice that the stars in Orion's belt should be called in Provençe 'The Three Kings.'

Wild and beautiful stories are told of the Star. The Golden Legend says, 'Now it happened on a time that they were there' (on Mount Victorial), 'on the Day of the Nativity of Jesu Christ, and a star came over them on this mountain which had the form of a right fair child, and under his head was a shining cross, which spake to these three Kings, saying, "Go ye hastily into the land of Judæa, there shall ye find the King which ye seek."' 'Some say,' the Legend learnedly comments, 'it was the Holy Ghost which appeared in the form of a star which

after appeared in the form of a dove. Others say, like to St. John Chrysostome, that it was an angel that appeared to the shepherds, and after appeared to the Kings, but to the shepherds, Jews, as them that use reason, in form of a reasonable creature, and to the paynims, as unreasonable, that is to say, of a star. Others say more reasonably and more veritably that it was a star, new created and made of God, the which when he had done his office was brought again unto the matter of which it was first formed.' This star 'hung in the air nigh to the earth'; it shone by day as well as by night, and it moved on before the Kings 'as a person goeth in the way.' Their journey 'from the East unto Jerusalem, which is in the middle of the world, a great space and a great way,' lasted thirteen days. St. Remigius says that 'that Child to Whom they went might well make them go that way in that while.' The pictures of the star by the Primitive Sienese painters are most gorgeous. In Sir Edward Burne-Jones's tapestry in the chapel of Merton College, Oxford, an angel is seen

holding the star. In a silver reliquary in the 'Treasure' at St. Maurice, a hand (like the hand over the Crucifix at Romsey Abbey) is substituted for the star. It is with a delighted surprise that in Hans Memling's picture of the 'Seven Joys of Mary' at Munich, one sees the Three Kings *take ship* to return to their homes by another way. The wonderful star, the gorgeous cavalcade, the rich gifts, need only a suggestion of the sea to complete the enchantment. The whole story contains the quintessence of poetry—it is a breath, borne on the wings of the morning from the uttermost parts of the sea.

There was surely never story so rich in elements of strange romance and beauty. The offerings of the Kings have fascinated the popular imagination almost more than the star. Pious fancy has played endlessly with these sacred gifts. The Golden Legend says that Adam carried with him out of Paradise the gold, frankincense, and myrrh that the Magi afterwards offered, and deposited them with other treasures in a cavern called the Cave of Treasures. Over this cave the star

appeared. The symbolism of these gifts is thus succinctly described in the Rouen *Officium Stellæ*. The Kings proceed to offer their gifts: "Tunc unus a suo famulo aurum accipiat et dicat: *Suscipe, Rex, aurum.* Secundus ita dicat et offerat: *Tolle thus, Tu vere Deus.* Tertius ita dicat et offerat: *Mirra, signum sepulturæ.*' It is inevitable that they should have played a great part as givers of presents. 'I Re Maghi' in Italy are to children what Santa Claus is with us.

Through a long, eventful history these three Eastern Kings became the Kings of Cologne. 'They were still living,' says the French devotional writer, Ernest Hello, 'when St. Thomas came into their country. He who had seen Jesus Christ risen from the dead baptized them who had seen Him in the cradle.' In due course they suffered martyrdom. Their relics were taken from Persia to Constantinople, where St. Helen deposited them with great munificence in the basilica of St. Sophia. From thence they were brought to Milan, and when the town was sacked by Frederick Barbarossa, travellers still, they

were carried to Cologne. Down the Rhine they sailed to their last resting-place, where, in a massive golden reliquary, a load for the shoulders of six men, they are still preserved. Be all this as it may, few pictures are more fascinating than that of their gorgeous starled cavalcade, pressing to its goal of pilgrimage through monotonous villages and sordid towns, and shedding its splendour still upon the dusty highways of the world.

THE QUEEN OF FESTIVALS

In an English sea-port town like Hull or Grimsby, on some undistinguished day of December or of August, I have sometimes seen a Russian ship with all sails spread and flying all her flags for St. Nicholas of Myra, or the repose of the Mother of God. Nothing in the world is more touching than thus to see how, in far-off places, in alien ignorant lands, the faithful keep the festivals of Home. 'Home' and 'Festivals'—the two things go together. A country without Festivals must perforce be bleak and unhomelike—at least no home for the spirit. I confess that to me a Festival is the greatest and most sacred of great and sacred things. It is the lifting of all life into a larger air, the penetration of all things with a deeper meaning. Whatever happenings, for instance, may take place in

the week of the Ascension, still the falling of Holy Thursday is the greatest thing that happens in that week.

A Bank Holiday is not a Festival, and no Act of Parliament can ever make it one. There is an absolute difference of physical sensation between mingling with a Bank Holiday and with a Festival crowd. I remember going out with a friend from the inn into the street at Chiavenna on the morning of one 8th of September. We both felt at once the new stir and joyfulness, the unwonted exhilaration, It was something like this :

> In every house the neighbours met,
> The streets were filled with joyful sound,
> A solemn gladness even crowned
> The purple brows of Olivet.

So the poet sang of the Raising of Lazarus—in itself a foretaste of Easter Day.

We have kept in England the two Festivals which surely sum up and contain all others—Christmas and Easter. With us, indeed, Easter is not what Christmas is, but in the popular mind and feeling it is not a mere Bank Holiday. In the strictly Christian

sense, of course, Easter is not merely the anniversary of an isolated event, however transcendent, but it is the original Feast—the idea of a cycle of festivals commemorating the events of the Gospel story grew up gradually much later. All over Christendom the 'Queen of Feasts,' the Day of days, is not Christmas, but Easter. Some sense of this being the one day of the year on which everything hinges is shown in the popular phrase, still sometimes heard in speaking of someone who is growing older, 'he's seen a good many Easter Sundays.'

I myself remember as a little child the eager impatience with which I longed for Easter Day. If fine weather and blue skies came in Lent I grudged them, because I feared for the great Feast. The first blue sky of the year must be kept for Easter Day. For nature to wear blue and gold in Lent was like a girl putting on her wedding dress some workaday morning before the wedding. I used to jump out of bed in the earliest light of Easter morning to see if the day was warm and bright and cloudless. It seems, as

I look back, that, in my childish days, Easter Sunday was always a day of pure, warm gold and bright soft blue. Year after year it 'gleamed upon the sky.' Easter Sundays that were hard and cold and grey came in much later on in life. Be this as it may, this feeling that Nature must have a necessary sympathy with the Easter joy, and indeed herself must share in it, was an instinct with our forefathers, as is shown by the old belief that the sun danced as it rose on that great morning. Speaking of his lady's dancing feet, the old English poet says, in the oft-quoted lines:

> No sun upon an Easter Day
> Was half so fine a sight.

Possibly it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that this belief altogether died out. A lady belonging to an old Lancashire Catholic family told me recently that as a child she had literally believed it.

Easter is no doubt the world-old festival of the Spring, transfused with a new meaning. The two thoughts are inextricably blended

together. It is filled with the sense of material and inanimate things being penetrated with the powers and forces of a new and divine life. It is the sunrise of a new day, the singing of a new song, the drinking of new wine in the Kingdom of God. A Life has sprung up out of the earth, belonging to it and lingering still upon it, which is freed from limitation and from bondage, agile, subtle, glorious.

It is the joy of Easter that this heart and centre of new Life is not yet carried into a divine Heaven, but is still to be found on earth. It is a lowlier and a lovelier Festival than Ascension Day. We see the Divine Figure eating the honeycomb and the broiled fish that the fishermen cook on the beach, sitting with the tired wayfarers under the trellised vine of the inn at Emmans, calling His friends by their old earthly names. The Life is transfigured, yet identical. A very lovely piece of Christian mythology was that during the Forty Days the place of His abode, from which he appeared from time to time to His disciples, was the Earthly

Paradise, remote, inaccessible, yet still existing on earth, and now once more, at least potentially, restored to men.

It is fitting, surely, that the Resurrection should have taken place in a Garden, and there can be no fitter way of celebrating it than our English custom of decking the Church with flowers. An English country church in its dress of moss and primroses gathered by village children, has more of the spirit of Easter, at least to my own thought, than an Eastern shrine glittering with candles or an Italian basilica strewn with laurel. But the flowers should be fresh spring flowers, and wild, shy, wood things. Talking of plants and flowers, it used to be an old country custom for people to eat a tansy pudding on Easter Day. The meaning of the name is, of course, the deathless plant, the life-giving herb. An old English name for the wood-sorrel was 'alleluia.' It is a lovely thought to think of the earth being thus carpeted with Easter praise.

In this garden, the Easter sunrise took place at midnight, long before the rising of

the earthly sun. The old, devout writers always speak of it as the Coming of the True Brightness, the Light springing up for the righteous, shining on those in darkness and the shadow of death. The evil spirits were scared by its Rising like owls and bats by the sun.

> Barbagianni, the great owl,
> In his ancient ivied keep,
> Hunting, in the midnight deep,
> Helpless mice and poor small fowl,
> Flutters in a blind affright,
> At the sudden silent light.

Hilarity, gaiety has always been the note of the popular keeping of Easter. The mediæval name for its joyous pranks and games was 'Paschales risus,' 'Easter laughter.' There were, in the Middle Ages, cathedrals where the canons played at ball in the nave on Easter Day. In the North of England a fragment of these old popular rejoicings is not even yet extinct—the Easter Monday custom of 'lifting' the passer-by, in honour of the Saviour's Rising. I remember reading somewhere an account of King Edward II

being thus 'lifted' by the Queen's Maids of Honour on that day. To what a world of blithe and happy simplicity did such customs belong! Another North-country custom is that of rolling the coloured Easter eggs by the children, this, too, on Easter Monday. The egg, of course, has always been a type of the new Life of the Resurrection. The song of that new Life is 'alleluia.' The very name is synonymous with Easter. It is the song of recompense and renewal, beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning. It was, and I hope still is, a piece of popular custom that one must always put on something new for the first time on Easter Sunday, must wear upon that day some token of the new creation, the everlasting renewal. For Easter means 'the restoring of the things that have been cast down, the renewing of the things that have grown old, the return of all things to their perfection, through Him in whom they had their beginning, Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

III

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

CHRISTIANITY AND LANGUAGE

THE soul of the language of any people is its religion. The soul of every European tongue is the faith of the Incarnation, as defined at Nicæa and safeguarded at Ephesus. To the makers of English, as to the makers of Tuscan, that historic Person who was born in Bethlehem, and died on Calvary, at whose voice Lazarus came forth, was just plainly and literally 'God,' and was thought and spoken and written of quite simply and naturally by that name. The idea called up by the word 'God' was the image of our Lord. The etymology of the Saxon word 'gospel' shows this. It was 'God's spel'—God's story, God's Life. It was for this that the Gospel-book was covered with gems and bound in gold and ivory, was carried about with incense and tapers, and kissed by the

priest at the altar—because it was the story of the Life of God. To have at least some degree of sympathetic understanding of what is meant by the Incarnation is a necessity for the appreciation of the best European literature, not only of mediæval, but of modern times. Without this understanding what can be made, for instance, of these two lines from the *Ancient Mariner* :

> Nor dim nor red, like God's own head
> The glorious sun uprist ?

If the reader thinks the God of Deism is intended, the impression produced upon him can only be one of uncomfortable irreverence, but how the heart leaps at the thought of the sunrise as a type of Easter morning! Again, if Wordsworth did not consciously mean the Incarnation when he wrote the two noblest lines in the most magnificent sonnet in English :

> Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep
> And all that mighty heart is lying still,

he certainly inherited the phrase from the poets of old England, like Chaucer, and

Spenser, and Giles Fletcher, who undoubtedly would have done so. To quote only one example from an earlier writer, Langland says :

With that I awoke
And called Kitte my wife and Calote my daughter
Arise and go reverence God's Resurrection.
And creep on knees to the Cross, and kiss it for a jewel,
And rightfullest relic, none richer on earth.

Langland, by the way, is often claimed as a Wycliffite, but there is no book in the world more saturated with Catholic feeling than *Piers Plowman.*

In Catholic lands this is still the popular use of the word 'God.' In the Rhineland 'der lieber Gott' is Our Lord. By the way, how touching is Crashaw's rendering of the 'Recordare' in the *Dies Iræ* as :

Dear, remember in that day !

Spanish and Italian folk-tales often begin in some such way as this : 'One day God was out walking with St. Peter.' There is an English proverbial expression which I have sometimes heard from poor people when

talking freely and naturally, in which the word 'God' is used in the sense of the miracle plays. It has, no doubt, come down from their time, though it is no longer used in its original sense. It will be said 'He—or she—would rob God Almighty of His shoe-strings.' This, no doubt, was not mere meaningless profanity, but referred to Him whose shoe-latchet St. John Baptist declared himself unworthy to unloose.

It goes without saying that this way of speaking is unknown in modern England. As far as my own observation goes, I should say that in England the popular religion is both anthropomorphic and non-Christian. By 'the popular religion' I mean the religion of that great mass of decent and well-disposed people who are not very ardent church-goers, or upon whom the services they attend make little impression. I have again and again heard something like this from rustic lips: 'If we could see the Almighty we should see a man like you or me.' One good old labourer I remember who always spoke of 'that Man above.' I used to think this

meant the Incarnation, but am now certain that it did not. The text relied on is that which says that God 'made man in His own image.' Only the other day an old apple-cheeked farmer in the train discoursed to me at length on this topic. 'They tells me "God is a sperrit,"' he said. '"No," I says, "not a sperrit, but a man wi' a godly sperrit in 'um."' This is altogether divorced from the idea of our Lord, as far as the great majority are concerned. It has sometimes occurred to me to ask whether, as regards the mass of the people, the result of the Reformation may not be summed up in one sentence: 'They have taken away my Lord.'

Since writing the above I have come across some very interesting remarks on this point in a book of Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer's, *The Spirit of the People.* He rightly says that 'God suffered' is a phrase no Protestant Englishman would ever dream of using. He, however, interprets the phrase to mean 'the whole Trinity suffered,' forgetting that the doctrine is that 'every Person by Himself is Lord and God.' One is, however, con-

tinually struck by the failure of writers of books to understand this. Mr. Rafael Shaw, for instance, in his recent work, *Spain from Within*, quotes a popular Spanish prayer:

Con Dios me acuesto,
Con Dios me levanto,
Con la Virgen Maria,
Y el Espiritu Santo,

and comments: 'In this verse the Virgin takes the place of Christ as the second Person of the Trinity.' But 'Dios' *is* Christ. The verse is an invocation of the three Persons of the Trinity and the Blessed Virgin.

The extraordinary variety and flamboyant character of what we may perhaps be allowed to call the Christian oaths of mediæval times, the oaths, for instance, recorded to have been used by Norman and Angevin kings, at least show the vividness with which this doctrine was realised in old England. 'Splendour of God,' if I recollect rightly, was the favourite exclamation of the Conqueror. This, of course, is the 'Brightness of His Glory and Express Image of His

Person' of the Apostle (Heb. i. 3), the 'Splendor Gloriæ Paternæ' of the hymn. 'Zounds,' the commonest of mediæval exclamations, which was, I suppose, in common use in England up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, was a contraction of the tremendous oath by 'God's Wounds.' The Five Wounds were a great object of devotion in old England. They were the device on the banner of the 'Pilgrimage of Grace,' the Northern Rising in defence of the old order, so savagely put down in the ghastly spring of 1537. They were known as the Five Wells, 'the Well of Mercy, the Well of Pity, the Well of Comfort, the Well of Grace, and the Well of Everlasting Life.' The five crimson spots in the bell of the cowslip, noted by Shakespeare, probably suggested the old English name of 'keys of heaven' given to this flower. It is indeed impossible for the human mind to conceive a more moving and touching image than that of the Wounded Hands and Feet and Heart of God. In the same way, the Italian *cospetto* is no doubt 'the Face' (not in Itself, but looking upon

men), the 'Aspectus Christi Jesu,' which is of such awful majesty, at whose appearing 'cœli movendi sunt et terra,' and yet to His servants 'mitis atque festivus,' 'kind and blithe,' as the Church says in her prayers. This exclamation contains the whole Christian idea of the Judgment, which is the prolongation and necessary termination, at least in Time, of the idea of the Incarnation. Far be it from me to defend the profane bandying about in common speech of such sacred and awful ideas and images, but the practice is the inevitable result of popular familiarity with them and realization of them. I was recently struck with this (for the thousandth time) in reading Fogazzaro's last novel, *Leila*. A crafty priest is about to give some instructions as to the carrying out of an underhand scheme to a foolish old devotee. She resigns herself to his will, overcoming her natural hesitation; 'si compiacque d'essere eletta, e attese il Verbo,' says the author. To Fogazzaro, these two sorry figures at once suggest the Annunciation. I am curious to see if in the English translation

of the book the allusion is preserved. In Latin countries the substance of the Christian doctrine seems to have got wrought into the texture of the people's minds, and to occur to them at the most unlikely moments, just as in England phrases of the Bible occur to us at all times as the natural medium in which to express our thoughts.

Speaking of Christian oaths, there was an exclamation very common in old France, 'Jésus-mon-vrai-Dieu.' The more usual 'Tudieu' conveys the same implication. 'Mort de ma Vie,' again, refers not to the speaker's own death, but to the death of Him 'who is the Life indeed.' If I remember rightly, in one of Giovanni Verga's Sicilian novels, an old marchese, crippled by gout, exclaims amid its twinges, 'Mors Tua Vita Mea' as he limps into the room. From a time and country given to 'language' which is at once filthy and sanguinary and dull and monotonous in the extreme, one may, perhaps, without blame look back a little wistfully to the picturesqueness and variety of the oaths of the Ages of Faith.

It is, no doubt, true that this familiarity breeds the most shocking irreverence, or what seems so to us who have been trained in such a different school. In Tuscany, as the postman toils up the steep white road to the villa under the fierce sun, the people in the house will say: "Here comes the postman, sudando come Gesù nel Orto." The words are best left untranslated. This is true proverbial Tuscan, and is certainly not meant to be blasphemous, distressing as it sounds to Anglo-Saxon ears. It comes from a religion of facts and images which for centuries has been presented to the people, so as to strike the imagination and fill the mind. Puritanism, on the other hand, is concerned mainly with abstract ideas. In reality it dislikes any attempt to realise the Gospel facts or any dwelling upon them. Show a picture of the Resurrection or one of the Stations of the Cross to the good Presbyterian wife of a Scotch gardener, well drilled in the *Shorter Catechism*, and her comment will probably be that it is 'uncanny.' 'I always so dislike these things,' said a zealous

Protestant to me one Christmas about a picture of the Nativity: 'they always seem to me so unnatural.' In theory, the good man quite accepts the hosts of angels singing in the midnight sky and all the other details of the story. The English attitude towards the Creed is, perhaps, rather one of stiff and ceremonious respect than of delighted and adoring faith. Even with regard to that first article, to which our people were said by Dr. Newman to give a 'real assent,' English reticence generally prefers saying 'Providence' to 'God.' For instance, you will hear it said: 'There's a Providence for drunken people and children.' The French phrase is 'Il y a un Dieu pour les ivrognes.' Talking of Providence, 'ben di Dio' is a pleasant phrase for food, belonging to the Italian Tyrol and the Veneto.

However, it is not for me to decide between Scotland and Tuscany. Still, I have sometimes felt the Anglo-Saxon ceremoniousness a little excessive. I remember relating to a gentle lady some experience I had had with a tramp. 'He began a long, lamentable

litany,' I said. 'Oh! do you call it a litany?' she interrupted in a pained voice. The French word, by the way, for a beggar's rigmarole is 'Kyrielle' from 'Kyrie Eleison.' A 'jérémiade,' again, is a pitiable complaint, from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, sung at Tenebræ, and in Tuscany the same thing is called 'a prayer of Manasses, King of Judah.'

Many proverbial sayings and phrases, current all over Europe, show the impression made on the people's minds by the spectacle of the Passion which was ever before them. 'Er sieht ja wie das liebe Leiden Christi aus,' is a German phrase describing some one suffering great distress. 'Kreuz und Leiden,' again, is trouble of all kinds. 'Courting is all very well,' it will be said, 'but after the honeymoon, dann kommt Kreuz und Leiden.' One wishing to humble another will say, 'Er soll mir demütig zu Kreuze kriechen,' in reference to the old Good Friday ceremony of creeping to the Cross. In our own country, 'to crossoffer,' 'to offer some one a cross,' is a Lincolnshire verb for to vex, to humiliate. References to the various charac-

ters of the great Drama are everywhere common. 'Triste comme Barabbas à la Passion' is from the Limousin. The penitent thief, 'the good thief' all over Europe, by the way, is 'the wise thief' in Russia. 'I am a thief, but a good thief,' recently exclaimed one of the Camorra prisoners at Viterbo. Volumes might be written about this. To give only one example of the hold the scenes of the Gospel story have on the popular mind everywhere, an Italian phrase may be quoted, 'andare in Emmaus,' for to 'disappear suddenly,' no doubt from the words, 'He vanished out of their sight.' The doctrine thus popularly enshrined in phrase and proverb is rather essential and fundamental Christianity than clerical refinements. For instance, there is a Tuscan proverb which I cannot at this moment quote, to the effect that for carrying a burden along a level road, or for going down-hill, the saints are all very well, but for carrying it up-hill 'ci vuole Gesù.'

Around the central fact of the Incarnation —the truth of all truth, as Christians think—

has gathered a great mass of traditional lore, largely legendary, no doubt, but all helping to make a furnished habitable place for the human mind and soul to dwell in. The belief in angels, for instance, has left numberless traces in every European tongue. These have mostly vanished in England, but even with us some remain. The exclamation 'by the powers,' for instance, no doubt refers to the 'Potestates,' the fourth Order of the nine-fold Hierarchy of the Heavenly Host. In mediæval days the popular language was enriched by the widespread knowledge of angelic lore. To give an example, the flaming colour of the cherubim was proverbial in old England. The sompnour in Chaucer had 'a fyer-red cherubin's face.' In old French and English writers one frequently finds phrases like 'un cherubin visage' and 'his face was redder than any cherubin's.' In modern English 'cherubic' means merely 'bland,' 'smiling.' The cherub is known to us chiefly as he appears on eighteenth-century tombstones, and is thought of rather as 'sitting aloft to watch for the life of poor Jack' than

as keeping the gates of Eden with 'a flaming sword that turns every way.' The idea of terrible majesty has quite disappeared, and 'cherub' has become an equivalent of 'baby.' In all languages the resources of irony are greatly enlarged by this familiarity with angelic lore. Thus in Tuscany the policeman carrying off his manacled captive is the 'custode angelo.'

In the same way the Devil has left his mark on language. To give only one example. 'As proud as Lucifer' was a common proverb when I was a boy. I do not think that at the present day 'Lucifer' would be recognised by the mass of the people as a designation of the Prince of Darkness. The proverb is very expressive and accurate. It means 'the pride that goeth before a fall,' the pride of the resplendent Light-bearer in his new-created beauty and magnificence, soon to be so cruelly mortified and tortured. Through the popular failure to understand this reference the phrase became corrupted into 'as proud as a Lucifer match.' Talking of the Devil,

the Provençal expletive 'Tron de l'Air' means literally 'thunder of the air,' but the idea is no doubt of diabolical agency, of the violent setting in motion of the sonorous tempests and the struggling winds, the 'Powers' over which the Devil was believed to hold undisputed sway. Montaigne uses a curious verb, 'se géhenner,' for 'to torment oneself.' 'To go through fire and water'—by the way, still one of the commonest of expressions—is a phrase laden with sacred associations. 'We went through fire and water,' says the Psalm, 'and thou broughtest us into a wealthy place.' The phrase suggests the passage of the Red Sea, the crossing of Jordan, the deliverance of the Three Holy Children. 'To go through fire and water' was also, literally, the initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries,

These phrases all belong to a world in which everything was personified, a world of myths and gods. This was a world which lasted from the most remote antiquity right up to the coming of the railway and the age of machines. When I was a child it was still

natural for the people to speak of the train as 'Puffing Billy.' Even at the present day 'it' is an unknown pronoun to the rustic population. Everything—a wagon, a shovel, a clock, a church bell, is either 'he' or 'she.' I remember hearing of a labourer who, from time to time, suffered from severe attacks of ague. One day, at a distance from home, he felt one of these attacks coming upon him. 'I leaned agin a gate,' he said afterwards, 'and I did beg of my aguey not to come on me afore I could get home. I begged 'un and prayed to 'un, "Don't 'ee, now," I said, "don't 'ee come on afore I can get home."' It is probable that among the rural masses Paganism was never displaced by Christianity, though in a greater or less degree it was everywhere permeated by it, but held its own up to the epoch of the railway. The tendency that then set in was towards an altogether mechanical view of the world,

All Christian languages are full of the Church, her communion and sacraments, the bond binding men to one another, and to all the powers of good. Our forefathers said,

'mine even-Christians' where we should say 'my fellow-creatures.' This last phrase, by the way, also involves theological dogma. We find the term 'even Christian' in Shakespeare, who puts it in the mouth of one of the gravediggers in *Hamlet* (Act V. sc. i.), as well as in writers like Juliana of Norwich. 'My faith' is, of course, not merely 'my word,' or 'my honour,' but literally 'ma foi,' the supernatural gift received in baptism, and zealously guarded as the most sacred possession and treasure. The French phrase 'to deny baptism and chrism' signifies the extreme of inhuman apostasy and treachery. Heresy and schism being a tearing in pieces of this sacred bond, the names of heretics and the sects torn by them from the Church furnish a perfect arsenal of terms of vituperation for the domestic use of the faithful. Thus 'huguenot' is still a term of abuse in Provence. Catholic doctrine indeed affords great opportunities of cursing. For instance, to wish any one 'a bad Easter,' 'mala Pasqua' means the wish that he may make a bad communion,

the 'May his prayer be turned into sin' of the hundred and ninth Psalm. Another favourite Italian curse, 'accidente,' means that sudden death without time for repentance and the sacraments, against which the Litanies pray, 'a subitanea et improvisa morte.'

There is, by the way, a curious folk-rhyme which used to be repeated by children who saw the moonlight streaming into their windows at night:

I see the moon,
The moon sees me.
God bless the priest
That christened me.

This is the invocation of all these powers of good with which the child is in vital connection, in the presence of unknown and mysterious danger, so that 'the moon may not harm it by night' (Ps. cxxxi. 6). It would be strange indeed if the sacramental ministries with which the Church has invested human life from the cradle to the grave had left no impression upon human speech. For instance, 'esser al olio santo'

—to be at the holy oil, is a Tuscan phrase, meaning "to be at the last gasp. 'To be at the last gasp' indicates only the weakness and transitoriness of our mortal nature; 'esser al olio santo' expresses a communion in all mysteries, Christian and Pagan, a solidarity with the faith and hope of humanity. Again, the expression 'meâ culpâ' refers to the phrase of the Confiteor, where the penitent beats his breast, acknowledging that he has sinned, 'through my fault, through my fault, through my own most grievous fault.' 'Se coucher entre quatre cierges' is a picturesque French phrase for 'to lie dead.'

I cannot but think that many of our commonest sayings, apparently possessing no distinctively Christian meaning, are yet coloured by the Christian way of looking at things. The 'joie de vivre,' for instance, is certainly a European, that is, a Christian thing. The Asiatic systems which denounce life as an evil, now so popular among our countrymen, can know nothing of it. The pessimism of degenerate Europeans like Schopenhauer, the madhouse cries of Nietzsche, have no joy

in them. But what a joyful ring there is in the old English phrase 'man alive.' It always seems to me a peculiarly Christian phrase. There is in it the first joy, that ancient joy that a man is born into the world, that is, the joy of Christmas. It may be far-fetched and fanciful, but the words always suggest to me, not only this, but the last joy, the recovered joy of Easter. They call up the Human Figure, rising and standing erect at midnight in that inner rocky cell of the Holy Sepulchre, in which there is room for a man to stand upright.

Not only this, but there are single words which have gained a mystical and sacramental character by having been used by the Church in a technical sense. Take, for example, the words 'way' and 'wayfarer.' It is well known that the mediæval mystical name for this world was the 'Via'—heaven was the 'Patria.' Man was the 'Viator,' the 'Wayfarer.' One has a sense of this, particularly in the Italian word 'viandante,' 'the goer by the way,' 'the passer by the way.' It seems laden with the thought of the

mortal generations passing by the way of human life with its stages of birth and love and labour, and joy and sorrow and death, to its rest and end in God. 'Ego sum Via.'

My own fear is that the language of Europe is losing its soul. It is hard to imagine a language altogether secularised, purely material, from which all sense of awe and wonder, all vision of unseen things has vanished quite away. But it is to this that we are tending. The poetry of language comes from religion, and this is what is being lost.

Sometimes, even now, one hears a phrase full of the old awfulness, the old occupation with supernatural things An instance of this occurred to me the other day, and the phrase was one I never remember hearing before. 'It seemed so long when you were away.' said Darby to Joan in my delighted hearing, 'it seemed' Seven Evers.' To the lover of the Blessed Damozel 'it seemed ten years of years,' but this is better. It is a phrase belonging to the world out of which sprang German fairy tales, and Icelandic sagas, and

Celtic visions of Hell and Purgatory, and Pilgrimages in Eternity, the world in which poetry was not a luxury for the few, but in and with their religion entered into the lives of the many. It is a phrase which survived the Reformation, with its desolating impoverishment of the lives of the people, which survived the eighteenth century, and is now dying away in remote hamlets in the folds of the Sussex hills. Perhaps the time I heard it was the last it will ever be spoken simply and naturally by human lips. I must add that the modern limitation of vision and idea was well illustrated by the explanation of the phrase subsequently given me by Joan. '"Ever," you see, that means a lifetime, that means the world. Seven evers would be a long time.'

ON CHRISTIAN NAMES

A CURIOUS chapter might be written on the history of Christian names. The only name recognised by the Church is, of course, the baptismal name, the nomen or nomina given to the child by its god-parents at the font. According to ecclesiastical rule this should be the name of a Saint. The Saint whose name the child bears is its patron, and the Saint's day or 'name day' is kept in the East as in the West instead of, or as well as, the birthday.

The Greek and Roman converts to Christianity did not lay aside their Pagan names when they were baptised, to take instead names drawn from the Old or even the New Testament. So the earliest martyrs had names like Laurence, Clement, Sebastian, Agnes, Cecilia, Catherine—names which

became to the Church hardly, if at all, less sacred than the Hebrew names of Scripture. By degrees the custom grew up of naming children after some Saint, either a personage of the New Testament, or a martyr of the first centuries. This first became common in the middle of the fourth century. The long and glorious roll of the martyrs of the Ten Persecutions gave names enough to choose from—names which long afterwards the Puritans in their endeavour to Judaise Christianity objected to as 'Gentile names.'

The vast majority of the names given to European children are thus literally 'Christian' names, names fraught with Christian associations. They are the names either of actual persons of the Gospel story, or of those by whose suffering and whose love it was carried all over the world. The memory of the earlier tradition, of course, never died out, but, especially in Italy, was kept alive by names like 'Cesare.' The Pagan names were brought into favour by the Renaissance, as the Jewish ones were by the Reformation. The Renaissance was a relapse into Paganism,

as the Reformation was a return to Judaism. The two elements had been reconciled in the Christianity of the Church. Some few names have survived, of which the associations are wholly Pagan. Such are 'Hercules' and 'Diana.' But it is a thing unheard of for a Christian child to be called 'Apollo' or 'Bacchus,' 'Juno' or 'Venus.'

There are a few widely used names which do not call up a distinctly Christian impression. The archetypal 'Alexander,' is he of Macedon, and the essential 'Charles' is Charlemagne. The last named was, of course, a Christian, but hardly a Saint. But how many boys all over Christendom in all ages have had Alexander the Great for a kind of heathen godfather, from 'Sandro' in Florence to 'Sandie' in Aberdeen? I do not forget that there is an 'Alexander' in that most ancient list of names recited in the Mass, but this obscure martyr could hardly have produced much impression. 'Roland' and 'Oliver,' again, are names not of Saints, but of heroes of chivalry. They bring through the long centuries an echo of Roncesvalles.

This echo, it must be confessed, is now very faint. Books tell us that 'to give a Roland for an Oliver' is an English proverb, but I never remember to have heard it. How deeply the conquerors of old time impressed the popular mind is shown by the names given to the four kings in the pack of cards, still printed upon them in every French pack. David, always represented with his harp, is the King of Spades; Cæsar, the King of Diamonds; Alexander, the King of Clubs; and Charles, the King of Hearts. 'Arthur' is another widely used name drawn from romance. I do not think the names of the Knights of the Round Table, even Lancelot, ever became very popular, and probably no Christian child was ever called 'Morgan,' after Arthur's sister, the witch. The name Guinevere has survived in the Cornish 'Jennifer.' An old-world name, beautiful in itself, and fraught with glorious associations, Pagan and Christian, is 'Helen,' the name of Helen of Tróy, fairer than the evening air, clad in the beauty of a thousand stars, the tradition of whose loveliness has filled two

thousand years, borne long afterwards by the mother of Constantine, St. Helen, who found the Cross. When a little girl is christened 'Nellie,' according to the illiterate modern practice of giving diminutives as Christian names, all this wealth of romance is lost.

All over Christendom, of course, the name of 'Mary' was loved and venerated above all others. In all parts of Catholic Europe it is constantly given to boys, generally in connection with 'John.' 'Jean-Marie' is the commonest of boys' names in France. 'Johann Maria Farina,' emblazoned on the eau-de-Cologne bottles, is an example that will occur at once to everyone. The name 'Mary Anne,' to us so full of hopelessly vulgar associations, was originally a beautiful devotional memorial of Our Lady and her mother. When one remembers this, what a difference it at once makes in the very sound of the words! In old France, and especially in Brittany, 'Anne' was a name often given to boys, as for example, Anne de Montmorency. Breton legends, by the way, make St. Anne a Breton lady, just as Andalusian folk-songs make

St. Catherine a maiden of Cadiz. 'Rosamond' is, of course, 'the rose of the world'—'rosa mystica, rosa mundi.' The French 'Reine' is the 'Regina' of the Litanies. 'Assunta,' 'Annunziata,' and the like are common in Italy. 'Dolores' commemorates the 'Seven Sorrows.' 'Mercedes' and 'Pilar,' again, are used as Christian names in Spain. The reference in each case is to the Virgin—in the latter to the 'Virgin of the Pillar' at Saragossa.

In some parts of Europe, notably in Portugal, and in South America, the Holy Name of Jesus is sometimes given to children, but this has never been very common. 'Salvator' is often used in Italy, as, for example, 'Salvator Rosa.' 'Immanuel,' the name in which the Mystery of the Incarnation is enshrined, is common both in Catholic and Protestant Europe. Immanuel Kant, Immanuel Swendenborg, are instances in the North. As 'Manuel,' it is very common in Spain and Portugal. The Vulgate, by the way, renders 'Joshua' as 'Jesus.' 'Per Jesum Nave stetit sol contra Gabaon,'

says the Office Book, 'quia in Jesum futurum agnoscebat typum et Nomen.' 'The sun stood still because it recognised the type and the Name.' The French, 'Anatole,' for which we have no English equivalent, means, of course, 'the East,' 'the Brightness of His Rising.'

The Crusaders brought back with them from the East many names, such as 'Baptist' and 'Jordan.' Giordano Bruno is the bearer of the latter best known to history. The names of the Three Kings, almost unknown in this country, are widely used all over Europe. I remember being told one sixth of January, by an Italian barber, that the three names together were like a song—'Gaspare, Melchiorre, Baldassare.' Let the reader try the rhythm for himself. There was a curious custom of chalking up these names on the Feast of the Epiphany, on the walls of churches and houses, with chalk that had first been blessed in church. This is probably the origin of the old French phrase, 'it is a day to bė marked with blessed chalk.'

The giving of a name implies the keeping

in remembrance of some one who has borne it before, and so the greatest of curses is that found so often in the Psalms, 'I will put out their name,' 'I will not make mention of their names within my lips.' The names of heretics like Arius and Nestorius were thus 'put out,' and never 'made mention of' at any Christian font. 'Julian,' however, held its own, in spite of the apostasy of its great bearer. It was forbidden by the Church to baptize a child by the name of Judas. 'Thaddeus' must be used for the Apostle St. Jude. Talking of the names of the Apostles, 'Thomas' has probably always been the most popular of English names. It, of course, received a second consecration from the life and martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury, which so profoundly moved our mediæval forefathers. It is a curious fact that no Pope has ever assumed the name of 'Peter.' The 'Prophecies of St. Malachy,' first published in 1595, says, 'In the last persecution Peter the Second will sit and feed his flock amid great tribulations, which, having been passed through, the Seven-hilled City will be

destroyed and the tremendous Judge will appear.'

'Esprit' is given as a Christian name in France. The names of the great Festivals were often used, as 'Noël,' now a common English name. 'Christmas,' by the way, is sometimes met with in Wales, as Christmas Evans. 'Toussaint,' again, is used in France, especially in the Midi. Toussaint l'Ouverture is an example. 'Panaghi' is the Greek version of the same thing. 'Pascual,' 'Pasquale,' and the like are common in Latin lands. I remember, as a boy, reading a story by Mr. Clark Russell of Spanish sailors picking up a castaway child at sea. They called him 'Pascual' because it was Eastertide, and he went with them far southward in the Easter weather. This gave me a great sense of triumph, and of its being Easter over land and sea. There is no English version of this name, unless, as I suspect, 'Pasco,' used in Cornwall, is the same thing in the forgotten Cornish tongue. More probably it came from the wrecked Armada sailors. In Spanish America names

like 'Ascension,' 'Assuncion,' 'Concepcion,' are commonly given to girls. The names of the Archangels are very widespread. The waiter who brings your omelette in a Strand restaurant is very possibly named 'Angelo,' or even 'Serafino' or 'Cherubino.'

One idea in giving a name has always been to bestow on the child a pledge and augury of good. 'Nomen est omen.' Names with evil associations have thus always naturally been avoided. 'Dismas,' for instance, the traditional name of the penitent thief, was never adopted as a Christian name. His shameful life and bitter death outweighed in the popular mind even the 'Hodie Mecum in Paradiso.' I may here remark, in passing, that it seems to me very probable that the word 'dismal' is derived from 'Dismas.' It was, perhaps, coined in the same way as 'jovial,' and 'mercurial.' Skeat is puzzled by 'this difficult word,' as he calls it, and inclines to the idea that it comes from 'decimalis.' This seems far-fetched. The ballads sung about the streets describing the execution of some murderer, with the account

of his dying repentance and confession, were just precisely what were described as 'dismal ditties.' The older English writers invariably use the word 'dismal' to describe a desperate situation, not in its present day sense of merely 'dull' or 'gloomy.' The associations of the jail-bird and the rogue hang around the 'dismal Jimmy' of modern slang. European language was moulded by Christianity. It coloured the whole lives of our forefathers. Lazarus, again, to return to the names, was 'carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom," but the people, in the most devout periods, desirous of temporal good, remembered the dogs and the sores, and did not call their children after him. Conversely, the wealth and splendour of heathen kings often blinded them to their unbaptised condition. Names were sometimes coined in the Middle Ages. 'Buonaventura' was a delightful invention. If I remember rightly, there was a mediæval poet whose name, in an English dress, was 'Good fortune of the Pear-trees.' This, surely, is an ideal name for a troubadour.

Before the rise of Puritanism, Old Testament names were seldom, if ever, used in the West. The Eastern Church keeps the feast days of the Old Testament worthies, and gives them the title of 'Saint' in speaking of them. It is perhaps, by the way, through the connection of Venice with the East, that Churches are found there, alone in Western Christendom, with Old Testament dedications, as, for example, San Moisè. In Russia, Old Testament names, at least those of the great Saints, are frequent, Elias above all. Eastern religion refuses the distinction of past, present, and future, in divine things, holding with St. Augustine that 'the things of to-morrow and all beyond, and the things of yesterday, and all behind, God has done to-day.' It always strikes one as being the religion of the Trinity rather than that of the Incarnation, and thus, probably, the same importance is not attached to having actually lived in the Christian era as is done in the West. In the records of old Brittany, as of old Cornwall, names like Solomon, Sampson, and Jonas frequently

occur, while 'Jeremiah' and 'Daniel' have always been popular in Ireland. This is very unusual in Catholic countries, and may be due to the first missionaries to Celtic lands having come from the East. Speaking of the Old Testament names, what a thrill it gives one to come across them in their Arab dress!—'Ibrahim,' in three religions called 'the friend of God'; 'Nûh,' the builder of the Ark and planter of the Vine; 'Eyub,' the patient Sheikh, whose sufferings are a proverb East and West; 'Sulyman,' the many-coloured king of gorgeous Eastern legend. With the best will in the world, I can never find these names impressive in their ordinary English dress. They are associated with all the dreariness of Puritanism, and with such characters in history and fiction as Solomon Eagle, Noah Claypole, and Elijah Pogrom. They become more sympathetic in their Gospel forms of Noë, Elias, Jonas, and the rest, adopted outside of England by the whole Christian world. The Protestant suppression of the Apocrypha almost killed out such names as 'Toby' and 'Judith,' so

common in Elizabethan England. 'Susannah' is still familiar in the beautiful English form of 'Susan.' The Puritans searched the Jewish Scriptures, and disinterred names before unheard of, like Jabez, Ebenezer, Abijab, Keturah, Kezia, Jemima, to take the places of Francis, Martin, Christopher, Agnes, Lucy, and Catherine. Even 'George on horseback,' as Bunyan calls him, was to them an object of suspicion. In New England, names like 'Adoniram' and 'Hephizbah' abound. In our own country churchyards you will now and again find a 'Karen-happuch' resting under her grey lichened slab. In the days of the Commonwealth, names like 'Arise' and 'Increase' were often given, The names of Mr. Pecksniff's daughters date from this epoch.

With the breaking up of the old order a strange confusion was introduced among the Christian names of English-speaking people. Both in England and America names taken at random out of books were substituted for names which were part of a living tradition. There was a curious jumble of the names of

all ages and countries, and apparently often a complete ignorance of their origin and meaning. The name 'Lorenzo' was taken from 'Keepsakes' and 'Albums' by people who had never heard of St. Laurence. Why use 'Lorenzo' when 'Laurence' is the English form of a universal Christian name? Why say 'Orlando' instead of 'Roland' or 'Inigo' instead of 'Ignatius'? It is done in no other country in the world. The Shakespearian villain has probably saved many English lads from being named 'Iago.' The giving of surnames, again, as baptismal names appears to be a peculiarity confined to the English-speaking world.

At the present day the Old Testament names of Puritanism have gone the way of the names of the Catholic saints. Mere grotesque vulgarity is not so common as it once was, though horrors like 'Persimmon' and 'Mafeking' are still occasionally perpetrated. There exist among the poor parents who, if they somewhere came across the name 'Antichrist,' and it took their fancy as a high-sounding word, would hasten to

bestow it on their child at the font. But, for the most part, the children of the poor are now called by appellations taken from penny novelettes. It is *toujours* Gladys. It is nowadays the very rarest of rare things for a little girl to be christened 'Mary.' In the register books of my own parish it occurs only three times in the last ten years, sharing with 'Britannia' the distinction of being the most unusual name. This surely is a straw which shows from what an arid, secular quarter the wind at present blows. Names of plants and flowers like 'Pansy,' and 'Daisy,' and, above all, 'Ivy,' are in great request, and pet names like 'Queenie' abound. 'Daisy' is surely a wretched substitute for the royal name of 'Margaret.' The names commonly given to boys and girls at the present day fill one with the sensation of a lost inheritance. They are like glass beads and trumpery gewgaws worn by those who should be decked with the priceless jewelled heirlooms of some noble house.

THE NAMES OF FAIR LADIES*

IT is no small crime to give a child an ugly or vulgar and trivial name. In the case of a baby girl especially, it is possible to choose a name which will be like giving her some priceless ornament of pearls and silver, of gems and gold. The names of fair ladies shine like stars in all the poetry of the world. There are names that add a grace to the loveliest lady who bears them. A fresh beauty and value, again, is given to the name by the fact that it has been hers, just as the associations of the choicest gem become richer and more varied by the succession of those who have worn it.

By the poetry of the world, one means the poetry of Europe, and of the two forces that

* *For Her Namesake*: An Anthology of Poetical Addresses by Devout Lovers to Gentle Maidens, edited by Stephen Langton.

made Europe. Leila and Zuleika, for instance, are alien from us; either Ruth or Helen is utterly homelike. Ruth was already an English maiden when the song of the nightingale found a path through her sad heart:

> When sick for home,
> She stood breast-high amid the alien corn.

What Pöe wrote of Helen may be said of the very name:

> Helen, thy beauty is to me
> Like those Nicean barks of yore
> That gently o'er the perfumed sea
> The weary wave-worn wanderer bore
> To his own native shore.
>
> On desperate seas long wont to roam
> Thy Hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
> Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
> To the glory that was Greece,
> The grandeur that was Rome.

That the European tradition still survives, at least in some corners, even outside of Latin lands, is shown by the astonishing and delightful fact, mentioned by 'Fiona Macleod' in one of her books, that 'beautiful as the Greek woman' is a proverb in the

Gaelic-speaking Hebrides. Mr. J. M. Synge, again, I know not with what truth, makes his Irish peasants talk familiarly of 'the Lady Helen of Troy.'

The poem of Europe, however, is, of course, the Christian story, and here, too, the name of a lady, the Lady of all ladies, for two thousand years has shone out like a star, Stella Maris, or

> The light on a harbour's breast
> Over the sea of the world's unrest.

The name of Mary is itself beautiful, and it gives a superlative beauty to many other names when joined with it. Can words be sweeter than 'Rose Mary,' 'Stella Mary,' 'Agnes Mary?' 'Mary Anne' is a name of singular beauty. Rossetti speaks of the five handmaids of Mary :

> Whose names
> Are five sweet symphonies
> Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalene,
> Margaret and Rosalys.

Of these the name of 'Margaret' is undoubtedly the most beautiful—I think the

most beautiful of all names after 'Mary.' No other name would so perfectly fit the poet's picture:

> Margaret sitting glorious there
> In glory of gold, and glory of hair,
> And glory of glorious face most fair.

It is a name fit for that 'Marguerite des Marguerites,' of whom Michelet writes so entrancingly. One can never decide which of the three forms is most beautiful, 'Margaret,' 'Marguerite,' or 'Marjorie.' 'Margaret,' is the most royal and stately; 'Marguerite,' perhaps, the most actually beautiful; while 'Marjorie' has a fragrant, homely sweetness all its own. 'Margot,' again, is quaintly delightful. But an English lady should always be called by an English name. Why say 'Marie' instead of Mary?' As to 'Maria' (especially with the usual English pronunciation), there seems no excuse for using it. The English form of a name, moreover, is nearly always more beautiful than the Latin one. 'Cecily,' for instance, is a sweet old English name all too seldom used. It is much pleasanter to the ear than

'Cecilia.' It was very common in old England:

> Call forth your gossips by and by,
> Elinor, Joan, and Margery,
> Margaret, Alice, and Cecily.

For gentle or simple, can these old English names be bettered? 'Joan' has the distinction of a superb simplicity. Another beautiful old English name was 'Anne.' When the word is written 'Ann' the beauty of the name is obscured. There is a horror often perpetrated among the poor—to wit, 'Jane Ann.' 'The Lady Anne' calls up a figure, courtly, yet very gentle, with soft brown eyes. Some names go especially well with the title 'Lady'—'the Lady Joan,' 'the Lady Anne,' 'the Lady Betty.'

The majority of the names used in the Middle Ages were, no doubt, those of the handmaids of Mary—such names as those in the list recited in the Canon of the Mass, 'Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecily, Anastasia.' 'Felicity,' the English form of the first of these, is a lovely name, and is still occasionally used. 'Sibyl,' of

course, refers to the wise priestesses who, in Pagan lands, announced the far-off Birth, and whose mystic utterances were gathered up and made visible in the Bethlehem Star. 'Rosamond' has, no doubt, a Christian reference, but it seems to express the world's delight in itself in breaking into flower. One cannot imagine a name more laden with romance. 'Rosamond's bower' brings a scent of Provençe roses down through the centuries. The tomb which her royal lover decked with cloths of silk, and adorned with burning lamps and tapers, seems a Pagan shrine set up in the midst of Christendom. 'Jennifer,' the Cornish form of 'Guinevere,' is a quaintly beautiful name. 'Griselda,' again, is charming, though its legend represents an ideal far removed from that of the ladies of to-day. Many pleasant and homely old English names, once very common, seem almost to have disappeared. Such are 'Gillian' (no doubt the 'Jill" who accompanied Jack in the nursery rhyme), and 'Joyce' and 'Pleasance.' 'Ursula,' the name of the princess attended by her virgin

choir at Bruges, or dreaming of the Angel in her palace at Venice, was a common mediæval name. It is the name of a lady happy in her servants, in Memling and Carpaccio. 'Beatrice,' the light and guide of the great Pilgrimage, is at once the lovely lady of a troubadour, and a Blessed Saint in Paradise. Thackeray's 'Beatrix' has given the name an added charm. Of the few heathen names that survived in Christendom, the most beautiful is Diana—a name beautiful in sound, in meaning, in associations. It has the incredible purity of the dawn amid deep woods. 'Imogen' and 'Hermione' are warmer and softer, but have something of the same beauty.

Many names have the loveliness of water, or flowers or gems. There is something clear and shining, for instance, about the sound of 'Christabel,' of 'Geraldine,' of 'Beryl.' 'Ianthe,' the name which Landor said he had so written in verse that no tide of time could ever wash it away, has a Greek, flower-like charm. Among actual names of flowers, 'Violet' is a name of great sweetness.

'Olive,' like 'Rose,' is the name of one of the great sacred plants of the world, and is a fitting name for a beautiful woman. 'Daphne' has the loveliness of all Greek flower names. So, again, has 'Amaryllis.'

But such names as these may be thought too bright and good for homely, daily use. What a charm there is in many simple and pleasant eighteenth-century names — not names of saints or queens, or stars or flowers, but simply of good women. 'Pamela' is delightful. Some few diminutives belonging to this time are especially pleasing. 'Sally' has a pleasantness nothing can vulgarise. 'Betty' is the most patrician of names—the name of a very bright-eyed, scornful lady. 'Molly,' again, is touchingly human. A beautiful old-fashioned name is 'Susan.' But so many ladies' names are beautiful, that the difficulty is to know which to choose.

ON DIALECT WORDS

CHAMPFLEURY, in the preface to his collection of French popular songs, relates the following amusing but pathetic incident of the last century educational campaign against dialect:

'Un enfant de paysans avait été puni plusieurs fois par le maître d'école pour avoir conversé en patois avec ses camarades; rien ne pouvait lui enlever ce restant de patois, auquel il tenait presque autant qu'à une tartine. Les arrêts, les privations de congé, le pain sec, ne suffisant pas pour lutter contre ce patois acharné, le maître d'école fourre au cachot ce petit paysan obstiné. A cette époque, le Ministre de l'Instruction publique envoyait ses Instructions relatives aux poésies populaires de la France à tous les archéologues de France, aux correspondants du comité de la langue, aux curés, aux

instituteurs, enfin a tous ceux qui par leur éducation et leur position, pouvaient comprendre l'interêt de cette publication. Le maître d'école fut invité, comme les autres, à recueiller dans le village les chansons anciennes en patois. "Voilà mon affaire," dit il en pensant au petit drôle qui ne pouvait pas arriver à causer en pure langue française. Justement l'enfant savait beaucoup de chansons, mais le cachot l'avait trop bien corrigé. Jamais le maître d'école put tirer un chanson de sa mémoire. "Oué je ne veux rétourner en prison," disait-il, craignant une ruse de son maître.'

I was reminded of this little story in turning over Professor Skeat's handbook on 'English Dialects,' one of the 'Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature,' now being published by the Cambridge University Press. This excellent little book puts a great deal of sound wisdom in a simple and popular form, and should do much good. For instance, we read :—'The speaker of the "standard" language is frequently tempted to consider himself as the dialect speaker's

superior, unless he has already acquired some elementary knowledge of the value of the science of language, or has sufficient common-sense to be desirous of learning something which at present lies beyond him.' We may hope that this manual will lead many to see that language is not an arbitrary and stereotyped convention, but a wind blowing where it listeth, a universal gift which men assimilate in their own way, or an innate faculty to which they give their own expression, a great ocean full of currents and eddies, a 'world sea,' or an atmosphere enveloping the globe.

The following sentence again puts the truth with regard to dialect in a nutshell:— 'In direct contradiction of a common popular error that looks upon our common dialectal forms as "corrupt," it will be found by experience that they are remarkably conservative and antique.' Professor Skeat instances the word 'hrinde' for hoarfrost,' occurring in an ancient Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. This was always supposed to have been a scribe's mistake for 'hrmige,' until the publication of the fifth volume of Dr. Joseph Wright's

Dialect Dictionary in 1904, 'in which it is shown that in the dialects of Scotland, Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire, the word for 'hoarfrost' is not 'rime,' but 'rind,' with a derived adjective 'rindy,' which has the sense of 'rimy.'' Now, as a boy, not in Scotland or in Yorkshire, but in Sussex, I never heard 'hoar frost' called anything but 'rindy frost.' (One must remember that a certain interpenetration of dialects is always being caused by the coming and going of the people to and from all parts of the country.) 'Rime' is, no doubt, a beautiful word, a word for one of D. G. Rossetti's ballads, but 'rind,' the 'hrinde' of the Old Chronicle, happens to be the word the English people made, and which North and South to this day have still preserved. Many vulgarisms, distressing to polite ears, are in reality good old English uses. For instance, 'a party' was, and indeed still is, very commonly used for a person, an individual. 'A party told me last night' to us, however, is suggestive of Sairey Gamp or 'Mrs. Brown at the Seaside.' But in the

early seventeenth century, Bishop Andrewes, preaching on Good Friday before King Charles, begins his sermon with the words: '"Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by?" This is evidently the voice of a party in great extremity.'

It may not be without interest to set down here some dialect words which a generation ago were were in common use in Sussex, where my own experience of the state of a Wayfarer began. Many of these are mentioned as occurring in different parts of England; some few we never remember seeing in print at all. To be hungry, for instance, was always called being 'leer.' (This word, by the way, is spelt 'lear' in the Handbook.) It is, of course, the German 'leer,' 'empty.' 'His bill was sharp, his stomach lear,' we read in a dialect poem about a Wiltshire blackbird. A dreary, out-of-the-way place would be spoken of as very 'ellinge.' This is possibly connected with the German word 'Elend.' A word for 'steam,' which I have never come across since, was 'roke.' A dish, fresh from the fire, would be spoken of, not

as 'steaming hot' or 'piping hot,' but as 'roking hot.' This again is the German 'Rauch,' the Scots 'reek.' As one began to learn German these words came back to one, giving a strange sense of the unity of language and the solidarity of the human race. One curious word is quoted by Professor Skeat, who gives an example of its use from Sir Walter Scott—'eme' for 'uncle.' I have never heard the word. But we have all heard of 'Oom Paul.' But to return to Sussex. There is no book-word for the stalk or stem of a small fruit nearly so good as the South Country 'strig.' To this day one instinctively thinks of the stem, say, of a bunch of currants by this name. Quite late in life I discovered to my amazement that 'strig' was not a word to be found in any dictionary. A snail, again, in Sussex was always a 'snag.' The word 'snail' was reserved for the dainty little creature with the striped shell. I remember, as a very little boy in a long pinafore, standing amid the laden gooseberry bushes with a big luscious gooseberry in one hand, and a great

slimy 'snag' in the other, and, in a moment of abstraction, popping the latter *bonne bouche* into my mouth and inadvertently crunching it up. I have never since been able to venture on the plumpest Burgundian escargot, fed on vine leaves.

Another word familiar to us in those early days was 'gahm' or 'gaum,' meaning a sticky smear.' I have never seen the word in print, nor had heard it once, until some years ago at Lugano, a young American, evidently from a remote New England village, amazed me by suddenly exclaiming, 'I'm gahmed from head to foot.' This confirmed me in a favourite theory that many so-called 'Americanisms' are simply old English forms of speech, carried across the Atlantic by the Pilgrim Fathers. These forms have for the most part become obsolete in the old country since their time. As a child, I never heard any other word for the autumn than the so-called 'American' term, 'the fall.' Quite recently I have heard in Lincolnshire the Yankee 'I guess' for 'I think' or 'I suppose.' In all probability 'I guess' is not 'Yankee' at

all, but good old Lincolnshire English. An expression familiar to my childish ears, on which I have never received any subsequent light, is 'to be grammered in dirt.' I used to hear it daily. It seems admirably expressive. 'A no nation thing' or 'a no nation lot' was a scornful phrase in frequent use. It was recently lighted up for me at the distribution of the Good Friday dole in a Lincolnshire village. 'What's your name?' it was asked of a half-witted applicant. 'John,' was the reply. We tried in vain to extract a surname, 'What's your nation?' shouted the Churchwarden. One speaks, of course, at random, but one's mind at once went back to a time before surnames were invented, say, to the days of the Plantagenets, 'What's your name?' the official would demand of a stranger seeking to obtain some kind of passport. 'John,' would be the reply. 'What's your nation?' and the answer would be 'Norman' or 'Breton,' 'Scot' or 'Fleming,' as the case may be. Many surnames, of course, are names of this kind. 'To have neither name nor nation' was another phrase,

expressive of the very depth of ignominious contempt.

A complaining invalid or a fretful child would be said 'to be always grisping and griping.' 'To spreel about' or 'to be spreeled out' was an admirable expression for the ostentatious display of finery. The very word 'spreel' is like the spreading of a peacock's tail. A 'rig' was any kind of striking dress or unusual antic or performance. 'He doesn't know what rig to be up to,' it would be said, or 'I never saw anyone rigged out like that.' 'To act it' was always said of anyone protesting too much, or making any kind of unnecessary fuss. 'Weeson' was sometimes, but not often, used for the throat. Dr. Johnson gives the meaning of 'sweal' or 'swale,' as 'to melt,' 'to waste away,' but I remember it as always used of the burning smell of linen, or, say, one's trousers, when too near the fire. 'All arts and parts' was a phrase meaning 'everywhere,' 'in all directions.' The word 'art,' however, strictly refers to the quarter from which the wind blows. 'The wind's in a very

queer art' it will be said, when for many days together it has blown steadily from the East. This, however, is used all over England. A very pretty Sussex word, noted by Dr. Neale, was 'chavish,' for the warbling of birds. Sloes and blackthorn berries were always called 'hedgepicks,' 'winterpicks.' All over rural England a hedgehog is still an 'urchin,' as it was in the days of the 'Golden Legend.' The children often add the descriptive epithet, 'prickleback.' 'We've found a prickleback urchin,' they will say.

The rustic descriptive phrases for living creatures are indeed admirable—so much better than book-words. Professor Skeat quotes a delightful little discussion in dialect between two labourers in the Isle of Wight, as to whether a beetle is a 'straddlebob' or a 'dumbledore.' 'Can't you see, with your eyes in your head, it's a dumbledore?' asks the one. 'It's been called a straddlebob ever since the Island was first made,' replies the other. (I suppress the dialect spelling.) Neither of these names could be bettered. In many parts of England a bat is a 'flutter

mouse,' the German 'Fledermaus.' In Surrey the rustics always call it a 'bat mouse.' The book-word 'bat' is admitted, but is felt to convey nothing. What is plain is that the creature is a flying mouse, and a name is coined which expresses this. In Yorkshire, by the way, blackberries are 'bumblekites.' 'A bumblekite dumpling' is a delightful name for a blackberry pudding.

I have left no space in which to speak of the Northern dialects, with which the course of my earthly pilgrimage has also made me familiar. I think with a great kindness of many simple souls, who do their best honestly to 'addle' all they can—of mothers who struggle to send the children to school clean and 'mensful,' who 'side away' the tea-things on winter nights, and make a 'lowe' and sit by the cheerful blaze. I see the 'barns' 'laking about' in the little street, and by the side of the 'beck.' I know the village in winter, when the ice-covered roads are so 'slape' that one must walk very warily upon them. I call up the ever-recurring prophecies of the weather, 'ablins it'll be fine,' and

'happen it'll get out.' Professor Skeat very rightly insists that the English spoken North of the Tweed is essentially the same tongue as Lowland Scots. Language is not an arbitrary invention, to be artificially and painfully acquired, but is the free play of the human mind, expressing with a marvellous felicity and exactness its most intimate experiences, which are everywhere the same. By imperceptible gradations, by a slow but continual variation of accent, of emphasis, of pronunciation, these expressions have become mutually unrecognisable, but their underlying unity is continually revealed and lighted up. It is said that Adam saw in vision the long procession of all his children till the world's end pass before his eyes, and in that same trance he must have heard from all their countless lips the 'many voices' which are the one Voice of Humanity.

THE RIGHTNESS OF POPULAR SPEECH

THE people have always loved to call a spade a spade. In the expression of their loathing of cruelty this has particularly been the case. Shelley, if I remember rightly, speaks of a poet as 'a nerve along which creep the else unfelt oppressions of the world.' I question the justice of this. The plain, common man, the man in the street, feels the oppressions of the world intensely. The poets interpret and express this honest, normal, common feeling of mankind. By the poets I mean the makers of large, elemental literature. Some miscreant, let us suppose, commits a loathsome outrage on humanity. David says, 'Let indignation vex him even as a thing that is raw;' Dante puts him by name in the lowest circle of the

Inferno; Dickens describes with gusto his final ignominious exit from the scene. These writers do not mince their words. They reflect and interpret in their grand manner the instinctive feeling of average mankind. 'It's pretty beastly,' says the plain man, if in a mild mood. Superior persons are unmoved; they weigh their words and talk in tame conventional language; in their aversion from sensationalism and the crude violence of the mob, they become inclined to defend, and to talk of wholesome impulses finding an admittedly irregular expression. But the great poets feel exactly as the plain man does. So David, and Dante, and Dickens are immortal; they live and endure; they will continue to do so when the chatterings of centuries of the solemn triflers are sunk in an echoless oblivion. After two thousand years Broad Church ecclesiastics find themselves, *nolens volens*, repeating David's curses; after six centuries bloodless professors are labourously commentating every syllable of Dante's scorn. In their deathless words the conscience of humanity

finds its constant expression. Mr. Chesterton, in his recent book on Dickens, says that while all sorts of people were crying 'Investigate,' 'Examine,' 'Report,' Dickens cried out 'Stop!'

In one way, the plain man also is a poet; he is the maker, the finder of the popular proverbs and phrases, which put the whole of Dante, the whole of Dickens, in half-a-dozen stinging, biting words. The people revenge themselves on the persecutor by some epithet which will stick to him *in sæcula sæculorum.* They called Mary Tudor 'Bloody Mary,' and through all re-readings of history, through all vicissitudes of theological opinion, while England is England, 'Bloody Mary' will her Majesty remain. Many old English phrases have always seemed to us to express this abhorrence of cruelty in a very felicitous manner. When Bunyan makes Mr. Cruelty say of Christian, 'hanging's too good for him,' he seems to us to strike a false note. The phrase rightly belongs, not to the cruel man, but to the righteous hater of cruelty. All such sayings

as 'he ought to be tarred and feathered,' express the plain man's abhorrence of any kind of serious malefactor; but as a matter of fact, they are generally reserved for such creatures as the torturers of children. 'I wouldn't touch him with a pair of tongs,' 'I wouldn't be seen in a forty-acre field with him,' are other expressions of popular abhorrence. This abhorrence is not confined to cruelty, but it is of cruelty that it is pre-eminently felt. The official moralists have hardly considered cruelty to be a sin at all. To the people it is the sin of sins. The persons experienced in education, the professional philantrophists, the disinterested toilers in the great cause of juvenile reform, the founders of Orders of the Good Shepherd, may not feel this abhorrence; they have, no doubt, other and higher aims before their eyes, from which they are not distracted by a mere carnal tenderness for the sufferings of sinful flesh; but the poet and the humanist, and the plain man always feel it. 'I would willingly spit on his statue,' wrote Charles Lamb of John Howard, the philanthropist,

one of the 'sprouts of whose brain' was 'the fancy of dungeons for children.' The plain man has the same feeling about an eminent schoolmaster, of whom Erasmus tells us that he would take a little boy just confided to his care by a tender and anxious mother, and having hastily arranged some pretext, would lash him till he almost fainted, saying, 'not that he altogether deserves it, but it serves to humble him.' It is supposed that Colet is the 'eminent schoolmaster' to whom Erasmus refers. Charles Lamb and the first passing chimney-sweep would speak of Colet in much the same terms. There is, indeed, at all times a refreshing similarity between the language of the great poets and of the common people. 'I ain't a-goin' to waste my breath on the likes o' them,' says Mrs. Perkins. "Non ragionam di lor' says Dante. Both alike are worlds away from the wearisome and unreal verbiage which more conventional and measured classes use, at least in their deliberate moments.

Many phrases in use everywhere admirably express the unvarying popular belief in the

justice of the ordering of the world, the inadequacy of the refuge of lies, the final impossibility of gagging and stifling the truth. Such are 'it'll come home to him,' and 'murder will out.' The people have no more cherished conviction than that a bully is always a coward. It would possibly be more true to say that a bully is not so much a coward as a brave man, valiant with that truest valour of which discretion is the better part. There is one popular phrase which has always seemed to me to pack whole volumes into its half-dozen words—'He's shaking in his shoes." This is said of the panic terror of the yet unpunished malefactor, seeking to hush up his crime, to distract attention from the rumour of it. Here we have 'The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth' of David, the 'Conscience, that noiseless whip with unseen thongs,' of Juvenal, the 'Conscience doth make cowards of us all,' of Shakespeare. Such a man shudders at shadows, starts at noises.

> Shadows to-night
> Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard
> Than could the substance of ten thousand soldiers,

is a superb expression in the great manner of this cowed and abject fear. Many phrases drawn from the observation of animals delightfully express the popular delight in the popular discomfiture and downfall of a bully. Such similes are, for example, 'he's got his tail between his legs,' 'he's very crestfallen,' 'his comb's cut,' 'he's drawn in his horns.' The taunting French and Italian proverbs warning the man with the wax head not to go into the sun of publicity, the man with the straw tail to beware of its catching fire, have an even more vivid version in the Yankee saying about 'the man with tallow legs going down into hell.' In such sayings as, 'give him rope enough and he'll hang himself,' one feels that the wish is father to the thought. The hope is that the spider of the morning is already swiftly descending above the culprit's head, weaving her rope as she goes.

All this popular vindictiveness seems to us essentially righteous. It is reserved for such things as 'make a goblin of the sun.' It is the reverse of the feeling of the homely

sweetness of the everyday familiar things which the miscreant is felt to have outraged. How delightful are such phrases as 'right as rain!' The summer rain falls on the thirsty earth, on turnip fields in flower, on chestnut trees, on the white dusty road with passing mares and foals, and carts of butcher and chimney sweep. How good it all is! 'Right as ninepence' again expresses all the natural human delight in buying and selling, in chaffering in the open air, in all the neighbourliness of market day. This is far from the Inferno, this good world we know. 'As fit as a fiddle' again means as right and good as that music to which the dancers go on village greens on sunburnt summer evenings. 'To sell like hot cakes' is very pleasant. It calls up the white-capped pastrycooks with their trays of gauffrettes and madeleines, moving among the Sunday throng of the Luxembourg Gardens. Another variation of this is 'to sell like ripe cherries.' All sorts of delightful fancies are evoked by this phrase, the old London street-cry 'Cherry ripe,' the first baskets of the fresh delicious

fruit in their green leaves, the bunch of juicy cherries given one day by a kind-eyed French-woman to a thirsty traveller in a crowded train, 'pour rafraîchir la bouche.' One popular saying has always seemed to me beautiful beyond compare, fit to describe the satisfaction of the utmost love and yearning—'a sight for sore eyes.' That is the face that you so longed to see, coming in upon you suddenly in the lonely evening. It is the Child brought into the Temple, whom at last the half-blinded watchers saw.

With this feeling of the goodness and sweetness of human life, and of anger against those who torture and darken it, there goes always in true popular phraseology the sense of trust in a large over-ruling purpose. This apparently takes the form of an intense fatalism. It is expressed in the saying that 'if you're born to be hanged you'll never be drowned.' This is the most intimate conviction of the people everywhere. It is their quaint renderings of the thought that we are in the hold of guiding hands, and of

the exhortation to take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself, by which they so largely live.

TOWN AND COUNTRY ENGLISH

WHAT one misses in twentieth century English is a certain racy smack of the joy of living which comes from life in the open air. Our speech has no taste of Flora and the country green—there is about it no smell of Mother Earth. The age seems to affect all its children in the same way. Optimist and pessimist write and speak alike. Mr. Chesterton's English is certainly more poetical than Mr. Bernard Shaw's, but they both alike write a language learned from books, and not derived from direct contact with things. This language is not very robust. It is not the tongue of Shakespeare. With all Mr. Chesterton's sympathy, for instance, with mellow Burgundy and old October, and his subtle insight into their magical effects, you will hardly find him describing one of his

characters as 'pot-valiant.' Mr. Belloc might, perhaps, do so. The vocabulary of the English spoken in polite circles becomes ever more and more restricted. Everything is 'nice'—we have nice books, nice curates, nice cakes. Mr. W. J. Locke has some excellent remarks somewhere about people who only know one adjective. Mr. Locke himself, by the way, is one of the few modern writers who write the old, out-door, merry, variegated English. It is curious to compare the talk of Shakespeare's young men and boys—Court gallants or lackies or pages—with its many coloured variety and vivacity of expression, with the talk of the young men of the present day, of almost any class, ringing the changes as they do on 'what ho!' and 'a little bit of all right.'

It is, no doubt, too much to expect that dwellers in twentieth century London should talk as they talked in the forest of Arden. Thirty years ago, in bustling market towns and pleasant villages, people still spoke the forest language, the tongue of Touchstone and Jacques. Borrow wrote it, Dickens wrote

it, Mr. De Morgan still writes a Victorian English which is in great part Elizabethan. In the talk of the people there was then still found the old touch with nature, the personification of things, the intimacy with birds and beasts, the knowledge of the traditional lore about them. The crow, for instance, in times of drought was said to 'cry against the rain.' The power was attributed to it of keeping the rain from the thirsty earth by its cries. It is curious to find in 'As You Like It' the same power ascribed to the parrot. 'More clamorous than a parrot against rain,' says Rosalind (Act IV., Scene 1). There is more, we think, in the phrase 'against the rain' than the dislike of the gaudy stranger from rainless lands to wet weather and grey skies. The old country sayings about the snail 'with his house on his back,' and the like, are all in Shakespeare. He is full of the characteristics which our mediæval forefathers ascribed to birds and beasts. There is a delightful ironical proverb in the 'Comedy of Errors,' which we have never heard or met with anywhere else, but which must

have been current in his day. 'Fly pride, says the peacock' (Act IV., Scene 3). This is a most picturesque variation of the saying about 'the devil rebuking sin.' One finds in Shakespeare all the old proverbs like 'it's an ill wind that blows nobody good,' and the old phrases which at one time were used constantly and were always so pleasant to hear. Arthur says in 'King John':

> So were I out of prison and kept sheep,
> I should be merry as the day is long. (Act IV, Sc. 1.)

As a child I remember many Shakespearian phrases still surviving. 'Old Father Antic' would occasionally be spoken of. I have heard the proverb 'He doesn't know a hawk from a handsaw.' 'He doesn't know a great A from a bull's foot' is in the same vein. 'For every Jack there's a Jill' was a thoroughly Elizabethan bit of English.

> Our wooing doth not end like an old play;
> Jack hath not Jill,

says Biron in 'Love's Labor's Lost.' (Act IV., Scene 1).

That old English, the speech of Arden,

was full of similes, full of personifications. A crying child was 'a little Misery,' like a personage in a morality play. The most graphic phrases were constantly used. 'Like so many small birds at an owl' is one which I remember. It suggests a crowd of Tuscan minor poets rhyming spiteful sonnets against Dante. There is something like it in the Bible. 'Mine heritage is to me as a speckled bird; the birds that are round about her are against her' (Jer. xii., 9). 'Rich as a Jew' was delightfully full of mediæval suggestion. One never hears it now, and never comes across it in print. No sooner do we open an old book than it catches the eye at once. 'He's lost his tongue' is full of homely kindness and wide-eyed childish wonder. It calls up visits to farmhouses in the country and maiden aunts in old-fashioned towns. 'To cut off one's nose to spite one's face' is an admirable piece of popular simile, happily still current. We cannot remember anything answering to this apt and felicitous phrase in any other European tongue. 'To make mountains out of mole-hills,' again, one still

hears very often. The Russian equivalent of this is very picturesque, 'To make an elephant out of a fly.'

The language of the present-day pulpit is wearisome in the extreme. We hear of 'privileges,' of 'responsibilities,' of 'problems,' of 'tendencies.' Dr. Neale has long lain in East Grinstead Churchyard, and the only living preacher we can think of who talks outdoor English is Dr. Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh. 'All the spiders in Scotland,' he will say, 'had conspired to weave their webs that morning upon that hillside.' This is the kind of preacher one would like to sit under.

Our English at present is suffering from a certain anæmic refinement. Does anyone ever speak now of 'kicking up a bobbery,' or 'Dick's delight,' or doing anything 'quick sticks,' or say 'it sticks in my gizzard'? The language of the people is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Board School education. To-day, if one uses such a word as 'pottle-bellied,' one feels that it is suspect. It smells of the faggot of indelicacy. A certain whole-

some coarseness adds greatly to the vigour and expressiveness of a language. We have nothing in English like 'tirer les vers du nez'—more's the pity! This most felicitous phrase must have been coined in Burgundy. It smacks of the wine country, and comes from a time before phylloxera laid waste the vines.

It is vain to quarrel with Fate, or fight against the whole trend of one's time. Our civilisation is against all these things. It is a civilisation with little leisure, not living much with outdoor things, cut off largely from tradition. This cannot fail to influence the language that people speak. The old English was the language of the country; the present-day English is the speech of towns.

IV

DISCUSSIONS AND DIGRESSIONS

THE SOUL OF BRITTANY

THE next best thing to going on a careless holiday oneself is, perhaps, to read a sympathetically written account of the holiday journeys of others. As one reads, past holidays are revived and lighted up, and one exclaims 'Et ego in Arcadia.' Or one resolves to make the experience one reads of one's own at the earliest possible opportunity. One has often read such books, and forgotten the dull surroundings, the dreary lodgings, the inky weather, the Arctic darkness with regard to food in which provincial England is enwrapped, and for the moment has been, say, walking about France far down in the South in early spring, and arguing with atheists by the roadside, and living on baby lambs, and trout caught from the brook while you wait, and 'petits fraises des bois,'

and green peas from Algiers, at two francs fifty a day.

The reader is taken, however, not to the Midi, but to Brittany, the true 'Bretagne brettonante,' by Mrs. Gostling, in her charmingly illustrated book, 'The Bretons at Home' (Methuen). M. Anatole le Braz, the student of Breton folk-lore, whose name is a household word in Brittany, the author of 'Au Pays des Pardons,' writes an introduction, in which he says that in these pages the very soul of Brittany is to be found. He speak's of the author's knowledge of the most intimate secret of the Breton soul, 'à savoir l'instinct religieux, la hantise de l'au delà, la passion et presque la folie du divin.' The Bretons are, no doubt, the most Christian people in the world, 'They glory in the name,' says Dean Church; 'they never weary of it; they delight to call themselves Christians.' But it is certainly a Christanity into which the older religions have been absorbed—a 'baptised Paganism,' if you will, but a Paganism which has been really baptised. They have all the feelings of awe and

wonder with which primitive man beheld the spectacle of the world, while they have drunk deep of the secrets of Christian faith. They sum up and exhibit in themselves the continuous religious experience of the race. This, no doubt, is what makes their delightful country so habitable, so hospitable, so homelike—such a roomy, furnished, human dwelling-place, a house that has been lived in for uncounted generations, full of pictures, full of stories, where the ghosts have not been too sternly exorcised, but have become intimate and friendly by long familiar intercourse with living men. In this happy country there has been no bleakness of reformation, no frenized white-washing, sweeping, and garnishing, neither at the present day is there any fury of progress, any haste to be rich.

Mrs. Gostling dwells much on this 'paganism,' though always sympathetically. She is at great pains to prove that the Saints are the old Gods, and to show the Pagan origin of Christian rites. The interpenetration of Christianity and Paganism was, of course,

mutual. Was not this the best possible thing for mankind that could have happened? The Church, for instance, which began with slaves in the Catacombs became aristocratic, but aristocracy was thereby Christianised. No doubt there have been often found Arrabiati more essentially Christian than many of the Piagnoni, Malignants more humble-minded than many Puritans, licensed victuallers more tender-hearted than many teetotalers. Who would have either side untouched and unalloyed by the virtues of the other, or care to live in a world dominated by either side alone? I would recommend anyone planning a work 'In Defence of Superstition' to go and live for a time in Breton-speaking Brittany. One of the first pictures in Mrs. Gostling's book is called 'A Painter of Saints.' This is a great industry in Brittany, as it is in Russia. A bearded peasant in blouse and sabots, watched by two wondering little girls, is touching up the stole of a solemn mitred figure standing on a bracket fixed to the cottage wall. These images are everywhere —the churches are full of them. Nowhere

in the world is the cultus of the Saints carried to such lengths as in Brittany. The unseen world becomes a home-like place to the Breton peasant, because it is peopled with all these familiar figures he knows so well on earth. They are as real as the next-door neighbours. There is St. Yves, the lawyer, who obtains justice for the poor and oppressed; St. Eloi, the blacksmith, patron of horses; St. Cornély, the Pope, protector of oxen; St. Fiacre, with his spade; St. Corentin with his fish, and how many more! St. John Baptist carrying the lamb is a great personage in Brittany. But the most loved of all is St. Anne, the mother of Mary,

Par qui la Rose a fleuri où ne poussait que l'épine.

The legends make her a Breton lady, as in Andalusian ballads St. Catherine is a maiden of Cadiz. There are saints for a toothache or an earthquake. One may think what one will of this belief theologically, but surely there is nothing servile or degrading to the dignity of man in a doctrine, which, say, at Messina, attributes to pathetic human figures

a power of intervention amid the play of immense and fatal forces—the oceanic and volcanic forces imaged in the Homeric mythology—and amid the whirlwind and the earthquake sets little girls, like Rose and Agatha, with supplicating childish voices and weak, uplifted hands.

The Breton soul may best be studied at Mass. It is impossible to look at the Mass-books which many of the white-capped women carry, some of them handed down as heirlooms, so used and worn, and yet preserved so carefully, without being touched. Of the Breton women it may be said that they present a singular combination of the virtues of Mary and Martha. Of the excellence and cheapness of the food in Brittany one is almost afraid to speak. In turning over this book, and noting the descriptions of meals and inns, and quiet little towns, I am constantly reminded of my own experiences. Mrs. Gostling, for instance, writes pleasantly of Le Faou. 'How strange Le Faou seemed,' she says; how quiet, how deserted!' It is, indeed, as grass-grown as Stokesley, as

deserted as Holbeach. But how different! There are parts of England where it is almost impossible to obtain food of any kind. The fact that people eat is carefully dissembled—it is a secret, an open secret, no doubt, but a secret still. This is not the case at Le Faou. I remember the eight-mile drive to get to it through the autumn twilight, the talk of the friendly driver, a girl running out of a lonely farmhouse on the way as we passed with a letter addressed, 'A Monsieur Jean Blaise.' 'C'est pour Jean?' 'Mais oui, c'est pour Jean.' I arrived in the sad evening grey at what seemed a cut-throat little inn, with rough peasants drinking round the hearth.

In answer to a request for dinner Madame proposed a meal which she modestly called 'souper'—a meal so excellent, so varied, so satisfying, with its perfect omelette, its mackerel fresh from the sea, its cutlets, its salad, its coffee and liqueur, that grey Le Faou was at once bathed in roseate light. I slept in a clean and decent room, had coffee in the morning, and, after a pilgrimage to Rumengol, the scene of one of the great

Breton pardons, came back to another succulent meal, partaken of in lonely state. The charge for this whole entertainment, including the voiture, was smilingly announced as 'sept francs, monsieur.' One hastens to add that at Le Faou there are to be found neither golf links nor an English church. In the early morning at Le Faou, a ballad singer, singing Breton ballads, passed down the empty street, and the people came running out to buy her broad sheets. Another little thing that pleased me was the mimic music played by a merry group of children who had formed themselves into an imaginary orchestra around a great stack of faggots. One with two sticks was beating an imaginary drum, another drawing a stick as a bow across the strings of an imaginary fiddle, a third fingering on a stick as an imaginary flute—all with the greatest verve and gaiety, the most perfect mimicry and keenest enjoyment. Why do the children of the English poor never play like this? Here and there in the grey street was a mulberry, 'wisest of trees,' or a walnut tree with a rustic seat beneath it. One

thought half enviously of the people who would still be there, so contentedly and cheerfully, when the walnuts were ripe, on All Soul's Day, at Christmas.

Everything in Brittany seems as old as the world. All is primitive, Virgilian, Biblical. For instance, Mrs. Gostling says: 'A Breton wedding is like one of those great feasts of which we read in the Bible. All are welcome, and not the least the halt, the maimed, and the blind. At news of the marriage they assemble from far and near, and the sight of all these destitute creatures taking part in the good cheer with the more wealthy guests is the crowning charm of the entertainment.' Brittany is the last bit remaining in Western Europe of an older and simpler world, with its hospitality, its courtesy, its unworldliness, its leisure, its charm. It is probable that all these things are doomed. For instance, Mrs. Gostling failed to see the 'Blessing of the Beasts' at Carnac. 'For the first time for hundreds, nay, as I believe, for thousands of years, the beasts went away unblessed by the priests. . . The Church has at length

refused her sanction to the traditional cult of the district.' I sincerely hope not. 'Ca se perd,' said a pessimistic priest, speaking of the Breton faith, 'ça diminue.' But all readers of Mrs. Gostling's book will hope the Bretons may yet long keep their happiness.

THE LAND OF PARDONS

THE true Brittany begins, I think, at St. Brieuc. At the railway buffet you perceive that you have passed into a land of leisure and content. The insolent waiters of progressive countries have given place to modest girls in spotless coiffes, anxious to serve and please you. You get an excellent omelette and a bottle of white wine for a franc and a-half—'for a song,' as we say. It is a phrase worthy of Brittany. 'A song' should be something easy and spontaneous, the very opposite of effort and expense—a violet, not an orchid. As you get into the train again, you feel still more strongly that you have come into a country of songs and prayers, where men are not in haste to get rich.

You are wise, and travel third, and watch the people. They make way for one another

and for you, and help one another with their luggage. As the train starts they make the Sign of the Cross. The priests are everywhere, with snuff-box and breviary, surrounded with affection and respect. They take a pinch between one Psalm and another. The old ladies take out their rosaries when they are tired of gossip. The peasants are all talking Breton. The most Breton Brittany is the country between St. Brieuc and Morlaix, and as far south as Loudeac. All the region within the triangle of these three towns is still a bit of the world of the Middle Ages, and to travel in it is to travel in time as well as in space. The quaint village inns are delightful, with their raftered ceilings and open fire-places with blazing logs, with the bellows and the tongs, and all the *appareil* of the days of Henri Quatre. It is pleasant to see wheat being threshed with a flail, or a wooden frame turned by horses, instead of the accursed steam thresher that makes desolate our English lanes. Life is very primitive and simple here. One morning, at about half-past ten, we knocked at a cottage

on a lonely road to ask the way. The whole family were gathered within, reciting the rosary. The old grand'mère in the chimney corner was giving out the 'Hail Maries,' and sons, daughters, and little children were all joining in at 'Sancta Maria.' This was, no doubt, a kind of after-dinner dominoes.

But we must leave all this country behind us, for we wish to be at Le Folgoët for the great 'Pardon' on the 8th of September. We pass Morlaix, the grey town with its strange air of remoteness and peace. Our halting place is Landivisiau, a little town which, in the dusk of evening, seems full of the wistful sadness of all world's end places. The excellent dinner in the comfortable inn puts all sad thoughts to flight. Why is it that in unworldly countries there is such diffusion and enjoyment of the good things of life?

This is the country of sculptured churches and Calvaries. The church porches, with delightful appropriateness, have always huge figures of the Twelve Apostles. They are quaint beyond words. St. James, for instance,

always appears in the garb of a sixteenth century pilgrim to his own tomb at Santiago. His gourd and staff are gigantic, and he is bedizened from head to foot with scallop shells. He has all the air of a palmer in a mystery play, saying: 'By Our Lady, ere to-morrow night we shall see the towers of Compostella against the western sky.' Within, the churches are full of Saints. St. Yves, the protector of the poor, giving just judgment between man and man, pleading the cause of the helpless without reward, 'unmercenary,' as St. Cosmas and St. Damian are called in the East, is the Breton saint *par excellence.* Judging by the names above the shops, six out of every ten Bretons are named after him. The immense veneration and affection called forth by such lives, and transmitted from generation to generation, is a great human fact, look at it as you will. When St. Yves of Tréguier or St. Nicholas of Myra left the earth, the poor people still thought of them as their patrons and protectors. What would Brittany be without the Saints? Everybody knows them; they

are familiar figures, real inhabitants of the countryside—St. Fiacre with his spade, St. Corentin with his fish, St. Pol de Léon trampling the dragon. This last is a favourite occupation of many Saints. He has been much trampled upon in Brittany. In one church his two heads have been cut off, and the beam that supports the great Rood thrust into their jaws.

But more wonderful than the churches are the Calvaries that stand by them. These are not merely crucifixes, but the whole drama of the Passion—indeed, the whole story of the Gospels carved in stone. The Calvary at Plougastel has three hundred figures—all the people of the Passion, the thieves with the Angel perched on the right shoulder of Dismas, and the Demon on the left of Gesmas, the Centurion, on horseback; Veronica with the handkerchief, Roman soldiers playing Breton instruments in the streets of Jerusalem. A country, surely, cannot be full of these Calvaries without a profound impression being made on the minds of the people.

Another softening and refining influence, one thinks, must be the continual pre-occupation of the people with the thought of the dead. The cult of the dead was the pre-Christian religion of Brittany. The grave-yards are cared for tenderly, and people often come and kneel by the graves. Every tomb-stone slab has a scallop shell cut in it, in which the rain makes holy water. The idea that the rain is a type of the mercy of God, seems, by the way, to have been an instinctive human feeling everywhere. 'Happy are the dead that the rain rains on,' says the English proverb. The Greek poet tells us that:

> The parched earth loves the rain,
> And holy heaven, which is full of rain,
> Loves on the earth to fall;

and Shakespeare asks, speaking of the guilty stain:

> Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
> To wash it white as snow?

In Brittany almost every Mass is a black Mass, and, morning by morning, rise in the

dark churches the clear, sweet songs that help the souls in pain. 'Kyrie Eleison, Christi Eleison, Kyrie Eleison.' 'Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona eis requiem.' In practice this has sometimes an inconvenient side. I remember going into a barber's shop in a Breton village to be shaved. I found a small boy in charge, and knowing, by old experience, the unscrupulous use which these beginners make of the razor, I asked for the patron. 'Il veille un mort,' was the response.

As I have said, the goal of pilgrimage was Le Folgoët. This is a village a mile or so from Lesneven, a little town not far from the Atlantic, where the inscriptions above the shops are painted up in Breton. The patron saint was an idiot boy who could say nothing but 'Ave Maria. 'Idiot' is a harsh-sounding modern word. His contemporaries, no doubt, would speak of him as 'an innocent.' I have known a woman in an English village, the mother of several of these 'innocents,' saying that 'her children were sure of the Kingdom.' To discuss this would lead us too far. At

any rate, from the grave of this simple-minded lad sprang a lily with 'Ave Maria' in letters of gold upon its petals. We arrived at Le Folgoët on the eve of the Festival. The village consists of a green set round with houses. There is an Inn of the Three Kings, a Calvary, and the pilgrimage church. It was a pleasant, kindly scene that September Saturday morning, with all the stir of the preparations for the fête. The innkeeper came across the green with a great armful of fowls. As the day went on the pilgrims arrived in streams in their holiday costumes from all the country-side. In the afternoon vespers was sung in the open air. As soon as it was dusk every window was illuminated, and there was a procession round the village green, all the people carrying lighted candles and singing Breton hymns. The pilgrims passed into the church, where they remained all night. We left them singing with indescribable fervour. The Masses, however, began at midnight. Later on, in the early morning, I took coffee in the little inn amid a crowd of

peasants who had watched all night, and then the processions from the surrounding parishes began. They came with gorgeous banners and with silver crosses hung with bells, ringing as they moved. At ten o'clock, the High Mass was sung in the open air. The pageant passed before one like the whole history of the world, and when the priest turned round and said, 'Ite, Missa est,' it seemed that he turned from the last Altar, that the completed effort and sacrifice of all humanity had been offered and accepted, and the world's last Mass was said. By twelve o'clock all was over, and the pilgrims were enjoying the swings and roundabouts with childish gaiety and abandon.

THE MUFFIN-MAN'S BELL

IT is my valued privilege, as a good Free Trader, every morning to read my *Daily News*. 'I reckon it's your morning relish,' recently remarked the railway guard, who daily throws it into my garden from a passing train. While enjoying this relish I lately came upon the following dainty morsel:

> The muffin bell dies hard. George Greenwood, an elderly man, who has been several times summoned for using a noisy instrument in the street, was again before Mr. Horace Smith at Westminster yesterday, for persistently ringing a muffin bell. Only last week defendant was fined 5s. and costs. He now put forward his former plea that he could not sell his muffins without his bell.
>
> Mr. Horace Smith said he did not see how he could make the penalty less than last time.
>
> Defendant: The bell is a time-honoured institution. It is one of the oldest things recorded, your worship. In King John's time, they called

for coats, cloaks, and everything with a bell. (Laughter.)

Mr. Horace Smith: But you see you are not living in the time of King John. People in Westminster in these prosaic days don't like the muffin bell. Now, I will let you off with 1*s.* and 2*s.* costs; but don't come here again.

One reader at least of these grotesque, pathetic lines would like to shake George Greenwood's hand. Who are these absurd and meddlesome busybodies who think it worth while to pursue this old man, to drag him time after time before the Magistrate, to deprive him of his living? Is there really any human being, actually existing in Westminster, or anywhere else, to whom that cheery kindly tinkle is a nuisance? To such the grasshopper has indeed become a burden; they would, doubtless, if they had their way, silence the cry of the cicala in the grass.

Improbable as it seems, such people must indeed exist; for the world is visibly passing, day by day, ever more and more under their control. They appear to labour (with deplorable success) to realise an utterly dehumanised, mechanised world. The world

they aspire to is, indeed, full of sound and fury, but devoid of significance, literally, 'signifying nothing.' They wage their senseless war on association, memory, colour, on all the Past. Bells, for instance, are the most significant of all significant things. The mediæval name for them was 'signa,' the signs. In the Middle Ages, they were rung through a thunderstorm, that the Powers of the Air 'might recognise the signs of the Great King.' It has always seemed to me that the test of a man's essential Christianity is his feeling about the music of church bells. 'Whosoever delighteth not in the sound of church bells,' a deeper Athanasian creed might run. If that sacred merriment wakes nothing responsive, sets nothing vibrating within him, we may safely conclude that he does not possess the root of the matter. It is my fortune from time to time to write begging letters for subscriptions towards a fund for restoring a fine old peal of bells. I sometimes receive with amazement an answer couched in some such terms as these: 'I would gladly support any good work, but

I cannot contribute to what I consider a nuisance.' Such souls as these, if souls they may be called, have no doubt, silenced the muffin bell in Westminster.

Mr. Birrell, if I remember, says that 'there is no sound in the world so fraught with associations as the tinkle of the Mass bell.' (I have, indeed, known an old lady who complained that at the High Mass at St. Alban's, Holborn, 'all her good thoughts were scared away by that bell,' but let that pass.) Here, of course, is the secret of the enormous, to some temperaments the irresistible, appeal of the Roman Church. She satisfies the natural, human love of an orderly significance. She remains a sample of the sort of world which once existed (say, 'in King John's time'), and which some reactionaries would like to live in still. Bells, for instance, were rung, not only for the sacring of the Mass, but, as George Greenwood so truly remarked, by hawkers of all kinds, the sellers of coats and cloaks and muffins, to call the attention of the heedless world to what they offered and exposed.

'El buen vino no ha menester pregonero'—'good wine needs no crier,' is the Spanish version of our 'good wine needs no bush.' Alas! for a world with neither bush nor crier, nor even in the long run, wine, with neither signs nor things signified. Alas! for all the cries and signs of all the vendors and hawkers of the old world, the sellers of wine or cherries or lavender, the criers of 'chairs to mend' or 'scissors to grind.' I remember reading in a leading article in the *Church Times* that the cry of 'chairs to mend,' 'exactly reproduces the Epistle tone.' Next week some very pompous and futile dignitary wrote indignantly: 'This sort of thing is what the ordinary sensible Englishman really cannot stand.' One Englishman, at any rate, travelling through the article and coming to this sentence, rested in it as in an oasis. It does one good to think of the lowly chair-mender as a sort of priest, using the tone, consecrated, traditional, unvarying, of one who celebrates a mystery.

George Greenwood's interest in his bell—small blame to him—is no doubt mainly

practical. If there is no bell, he knows too well, there will soon be no muffins. I see that a constable, discoursing on the case to a correspondent of the *Daily News*, remarked 'Muffins ain't what they used to be. Muffins is gone out.' I must sadly admit that to me also this seems to be the case. But who would care to get muffins from the Stores? The bell is, so to speak, the soul of the muffin. Of an evening, after dinner, it is often my lot to talk with an old lady of eighty, who relates the experiences of her earliest days. The first thing she remembers as a special treat and pleasure was going to tea on Sunday afternoons with her grandmother and grandfather. They always had muffins until their teeth got too bad to deal with them, and then they substituted crumpets. When this last delectable delicacy is chased from the rest of the world, will it take refuge, like the old gods (as Mr. Galsworthy reminds us), in some secluded Alpine valley? Might one some day have tea and crumpets with Apollo, say, in the 'Albergo del Sole d'Oro,' at Sollazzone, in the Italian Tyrol?

Let no one write to the *Nation* that this is anachronistic, or to point out that crumpets are a northern dainty—the day may come when all good people and things may have to take refuge in one common country.

Talking of the recollections of old people, I remember an older lady still, to whose narrations of *her* earliest days I listened as a child. One figure she described left in my mind a mental picture that is with me still—a pastrycook in a white cap and apron, with a bell, who cried 'Hot mutton pies!' at eleven o'clock. The children watched him from their schoolroom windows. One sees now the bright sunshine of those old autumn mornings; one smells the fragrance of the delicious little peppery pies. It is, no doubt, a mirage—the dream of the golden days 'quand Marthe filait.' Perhaps the present age of black smoke and steam and hideous noise, of factories, threshers, rollers, hooters, motors, may one day seem a tranquil past. But it appears a wanton outrage to break the slender threads that reach through generations, that are spun over chasms and abysses,

and to destroy, so far as in us lies, the corporate life of the race. 'We don't want antique,' said a very modern barber one day to myself. 'we wants up-to-date,' and the majority of our countrymen seem unhappily of his opinion. The world of the Past does not vanish fast enough, it must be hustled off the scene. We are to see no sight our fathers saw, to hear no sound they heard. The grace of the street-hawker's bell is that it was heard in other days by emperor and clown, that it rang before the French Revolution, before the Reformation, that it fell on the ears of King John.

How the nursery rhymes of all Europe go to the 'ding dong dell' of bells!—'Pussy's in the Well,' 'Oranges and Lemons,' 'Frère Jacques,' 'Tre Sorelle in un Balcon.' How full Dickens is of chimes and bells! How Charles Lamb must have especially delighted in that pleasant tinkle which the inhabitants of Westminster can no longer endure in their midst!

It is pleasant to turn from these impoverishers of the world, and to think of

people that still exist all over Europe, the masters of some peculiar art or craft, the possessors of some treasure of traditional lore, of expert technical knowledge, handed down as an heirloom through generations, say, of some local sport or dance or game, of some old-world musical instrument, of some dialect, once a language, now fading away. At the antipodes of our stampers-out of every old and pleasant thing stands such a man as Fédéri Mistral, saving and treasuring up the whole life of Provençe, enshrined in its fast dying language, in his great work 'Lou Trésor dou Félibrige.' Such men enlarge the life of the world. So, too, in humbler ways do all those who stem the tide of blankness and monotony by preserving sacred crafts : the old traditional and local things—the chasublier and the ikon-maker, the morris dancer and the improvisatore, the pelotari and the guittarista, the toreador and the félibre and the carilloneur.

ON FRENCH INNS

FOLGORE DI SAN GIMIGNIANO, the troubadour with the amazing name, wrote, like the late Mr. Mortimer Collins, a series of gastronomic sonnets on the months of the year. Under the heading of October he advises the reader to

> take his physic roast with fork and knife,

adding that

> Sounder and snugger you shall feel at home
> Than lake fish, river fish, or fish at sea,
> Inheriting the cream of Christian life.

It seems to me that 'the cream of Christian life,' in Folgore's sense of the word, may be more successfully 'inherited' in an old-fashioned French provincial inn in a country town than in any private house or public hostelry of any other part of the world.

I was reminded of the quaint mediæval mixture of gastronomy and devotion the other day, by coming across a Burgundian noël describing the preparations made on the Great Night by the innkeepers of the town of Bourg-en-Bresse. The very name of Bourg-en-Bresse sounds promising from a gastronomic point of view. It seem redolent of good things. Speaking of Burguudy in general, a French writer gratefully remarks: 'Bourg nourishes excellent capons, Belley fabricates sausages as good as those of Lyon, Nantua is not content with its écrevisses and its trout. He who does not know the rissoles of Nantua has yet to learn what a rissole is. The cheese of Gex is most renowned.' The noël is so curious, and gives so pleasant a picture of the plenty reigning in the hospitable houses and pleasant inns of a mellow old Burgundian town, that I may be pardoned for translating (literally) some of its many stanzas :—

As soon as the news was known in the good town of Bourg, they beat the drum, that all might bring provisions together. Fat capons, woodcocks, leverets,

quails were taken from Curnillon for the réveillon supper.

Gog brought three young turkey chicks, and stuffed a goose, and made a good ragout of a loin of veal. His wife made boudins, and got from M. de Choin a great silver basin in which to carry her present.

They went quickly to the host of the Good Hope, who brought godiveaux and a fine andouille. He composed a fricandeau of calves' ears, and brought three little barrels of mustard of Dijon.

When the host of the St. Francis heard the noise of spits and frying-pans in the quarter of Tesnière, he ordered his valet to make a potringue of chicken so good that it made all the world lick their five fingers and their lips.

When the host of the Shield saw people starting in the moonlight, he mixed five crowns of sugar with fine flour, to make those cakes like castles, which are better than bread for ladies and children.

So they go on. The landlord of the Apple sends two tarts so good that the servants eat them on the way. The chef of the Queen Claude dances round his oven as he makes all sorts of delicate patisserie. The hostess of the Olive Tree keeps, turning, turning, turning, her bugnettes in the pan. The landlord of the Ship puts into his big hat a cheese so spicy and good that all the dogs follow him on the way.

These might be fantastic inns in some delightful country of Cockayne, rather than the hostelries of one Burgundian town. But the same joyous tradition of hospitality and good cooking reigns all over France. Mr. Henry James says that Touraine is 'the land of good dinners.' Speaking from my own experience, I should be inclined to give the palm among all the provinces to that pleasant land of Rabelais. The Inn of the Pheasant at Tours is, or was ten years ago, the Queen of Hostelries. A recent correspondent of the 'Times' says that, in the course of a motor tour through France this autumn, he came to look with positive veneration on the chef of a French inn. In 1899, the year of the Dreyfus trial, the chef of the Pheasant was an artist. I still remember gratefully his langoustes mayonnaise, his confections of perdreaux, his pâtés, his sauce verte with cold fish, his grenouilles. What delightful food, too, in simpler places, at Loches, at Azay-le-Rideau, at Amboise! However, the 'friture de Loire,' which frequently appeared, was pure mud, that autumn, in Touraine.

One great feature of the food in French inns is its catholicity. I remember an old man enthusiastically praising the food of the English workhouse of which he was an inmate. 'The best of food,' he remarked, 'suitable for either Protestants or Catholics.' The religionist of any persuasion must be hard to please who will not find something he likes in the menu of a French provincial table d'hôte. There is something democratic in French cookery which is very pleasant. 'Perdrix au choux' is a dish that would never be dreamed of in an aristocratic country like our own, but it is excellent with its morsels of fat bacon or little salty sausages. In Touraine you may see the personnel of the hôtel feasting on escargots under a grape-loaded trellis. One must draw the line somewhere—for my own part I draw it at tripe—but it is a mistake to be too fastidious. I remember in a village in Savoy, where one could not get shaved or buy a newspaper, coming upon a cheerful old woman compounding some mixture in a great copper pot. In answer to inquiries, she said it was 'un plat de pays.'

If I remember rightly, its principle ingredients were cabbage and sausages. I went further and fared worse, and in the late afternoon returned to the old lady, who served me with big ripe pears, ambrosial pâtisserie, and café-au-lait, for seventy-five centimes. Talking of the French habit of eating everything, it is curious to find dishes which most English people would consider garbage, alternating with luxuries which few English people ever taste at all. I remember at that delightful hostelry in the market place at Quimper, the Lion d'Or, after two or three dishes that put a severe strain upon me, being suddenly offered a hot lobster cooked in white wine.

The dishes vary in the different provinces. Inland, of course, one loses the fish of the Channel, and the shrimps and mussels—those delicate creatures of narrow seas and friendly shores. I could never pretend to much enthusiasm for écrevisses. A dozen of the prawns of Vannes are worth all the écrevisses in the world. On the Breton coast they begin déjeûner day after day with oysters, and go on with prawns. Like the

Times correspondent before referred to, I myself this autumn found the goodness and cheapness of the food at the inns of small country towns like Josselin and Ploërmel simply astonishing. Brittany, however, is a more or less tourist country. In Poitou, one thinks one would be really in France. Here one would find the true gaiety of the 'windy fields'—here would be menus like Stevenson's, 'a fish from the lake in a Béarnaise sauce, a melon, asparagus, a fat fowl in a fricassee.' With what joy I heard the host at Josselin announce, 'Monsieur, je suis poitevin!"

One likes all sorts of French country inns, and everything about them. One likes to watch the resourceful Madame, in the kitchen of the humbler houses, cutting up the cold meat, and, whilst her guests are eating it, making the omelette for the next course. One likes the great courtyards of larger houses, into which one feels the troupe of comedians from 'Capitaine Fracasse' may burst at any time. One likes their names, with their suggestions of French history, the most enthralling romance in the world—for

instance, 'Hôtel Marie de Médicis.' One likes, too, the names of the dishes the chef so skilfully compounds. What, for example, can be more poetic than 'tournedos marchand de vin!' This, no doubt, was the father of Beauty who married the Beast, the rich merchant who brought home to his daughters the pearl necklace, the silk dress, and the white rose, and for whom this particular beefsteak was always served on his journeys through the towns of France. Again, one likes the aubergiste himself, in all his glory and pride. 'C'est une belle fleur,' said the innkeeper at Coutances, pointing to a big magnolia in flower in the inn garden. Last, not least, one likes the commis voyageurs. It is often a delight to listen to their conversation. At a table d'hôte in Brittany this autumn a quaint little man from the Midi was extolling the glories of a vegetariau diet, as he dined off potatoes and haricot beans. 'Malgré tout, messieurs,' he said, 'j'ai resté frugal.' Towards the close of the meal he developed a longing for fruit. 'Je donnerais ma vie, messieurs, pour des fruits, des raisins,

des pêches, des poires.' He went on in this strain of heart-rending eloquence for so long that the serving-maid was touched, and produced a few green plums. 'Des fruits! des fruits!' exclaimed the little man with transport, in the tone of one who after desert leagues beholds the sea. 'Fructus,' exclaimed a fat commis voyageur opposite. Here was the Latin tradition—the still living Latin tongue.

ON SOME FRENCH PICTURE-BOOKS

'UNCLE DICK,' said a little girl of three the other day, 'if you won't show me those books, I think an accident 'll happen to you.' The remark was full of the delightful inconsequent egotism of childhood. The looking at these particular picture-books, illustrating French nursery rhymes and children's songs, has long been part of the daily routine which age does not wither nor custom stale. 'Show books, show books,' is the daily after-breakfast cry. In response to this appeal, how often do the daily papers go unread! We open the books, and at once we are far from London and the twentieth century, in that happy country, la vieille France, any time between the Jacquerie and the Revolution.

Let the reader come with us this December

morning. The fog lifts, the frost thaws. London vanishes, and Lincolnshire too. We are in the Place at Amboise. M. Jules Lemaître, if I remember, says that the Loire is the true French river. The genius of France, the soul of French history, hovers surely above the bridge at Amboise, amid the swallows. Amboise is France. On the Place at Amboise, with that delightful inn at the corner, in sight of the château, and the bridge and the river, under the quaint old houses, in and out amid the straight row of green trees, all the old-world figures of French nursery rhymes dance an unending farandole in a continual September. 'Sur la Place d'Amboise,' to vary the rhyme, 'tout le monde y danse en rond.' We all know and love those figures. There is the King of Yvetot in his cotton nightcap, Cadet Rousselle equipped for the chase, the little Bergère in blue with her white sheep, the Maid with her sabots passing through Lorraine, King Dagobert, Frère Jacques with his big bell, and how many more! In the corner are the musicians with their fiddles, seated on chairs

placed on the top of empty wine-casks, as you may see them anywhere about provincial France. One of them has taken off a red hat like a cardinal's and hung it on a green branch of the tree above his head.

We turn the pages, and go from province to province of that contented country. Here is the village wedding procession, just as you may see it any day in Brittany. The musicians lead the way with their instruments, the Breton wedding music, 'le biniou et la bombarde.'

> Gai, gai, marions-nous,
> Mettons nous donc en ménage.

Here is the table spread for all the village in the open air, loaded with bottles of cider and white wine, now mostly empty, as the last revellers, with laborious steadiness, effect a reluctant withdrawal:

> Allez-vous-en, gens de la noce,
> Allez-vous-en, chacun chez vous,
> Notre fille est mariée,
> Nous n'avons plus besoin de vous.

This, too, is a village in Basse-Bretagne,

where the Divine Mendicant asks alms, holding out a big, battered hat; we know every detail of that village very well: the grey clocher, the carts standing in the street, the cocks and hens about the doors. The next picture is in Normandy; the pierced spire, in and out of which the birds fly, is surely that of St. Pierre at Caen. The people are coming out of church.

> Alleluia, la Messe est dite,
> Chacun court à sa marmite,
> Monsieur le Curé a son repas,
> Alleluia.

But the landscape of the most charming of old-world rhymes, 'Si le Roy m'avait donné,' is that of the Ile-de-France. Henry of Navarre, with his great white plume, sits on his white horse and casts a sinister eye on the shrinking little girl whom the boy in red supports with one arm, while with the other he waves a red hat with a certain frightened angry courtesy at the King. Over his shoulder is slung some sort of old-world fiddle; he belongs, no doubt, to that 'tenth order,' as a stern mediæval moralist described

the minstrels, when comparing the various estates of men in the Holy Church with the nine orders of Angels. In the distance one sees the poplars by the Seine, and the towers of Nôtre Dame.

In 'Sur le Pont du Nord' we are far down in the South. All the inhabitants of some little town of the Midi are dancing on a bridge hung with many-coloured paper lanterns beneath a huge moon on a breathless summer night. The history jars a little amid these scenes. Adèle, as is well known, was forbidden by her mother to attend this ball; her brother came with a boat to convey her to the bridge in defiance of the maternal command. The boat capsized, and they both were drowned.

Voilà le sort des enfants ostinés,

says the moral cautionary rhyme.

The first French children's rhyme an English child hears is generally 'Frère Jacques.'

Frère Jacques, frère Jacques,
Dormez-vous, dormez-vous,
Sonnez me les matines.
Din-din-dong.

Here the brethren are seen passing in Indian file into the little church with their great brown cowls, their shaven crowns, and long white beards; an immense bluebottle fly has settled on the nose of the last, and completely blots it out. This detail never fails to arouse delight. The scenery all about is of the Seine. Above the church towers a great castle. Hard by is a mulberry tree, a ladder against its trunk for gathering the fruit. On a distant height on the other side of the river is a windmill. How often, by the way, in these rhymes, does a windmill figure!—'Meunier, tu dors,' and again, 'La meunière est bien malade.' More than a blacksmith's forge, more even than a ship in full sail, a windmill seems the most delightful of all ancient human things. I, who write this, live in a level waste, out of which two noble landmarks rose a year ago—a church tower and a windmill. I looked out one morning, and saw that while the tower still stood, the mill was gone. It had been there for two hundred years. 'They're pulling down about two a month in this part of the country,' I was told.

This is the market at Chartres, the Market at Vannes. Who does not know the forest of green umbrellas, the market where they sell things that you really want to buy, not agricultural implements, but bright coloured pots and pans, and fruit and flowers, and all sorts of good things to eat?

J'ai des poules a vendre
Des rouges et des blanches,
A quat' sous, à quat' sous,
Marie, Marie, tournez-vous.

All this went on so in the days of the League. Amid such scenes as these pictures show, if one had been going about France in the late summer of 1572, one might have heard the distant rumour of the Saint Bartholomew, in the hot August night, over one's supper and white wine, in some rustic wayside inn beside the Loire.

The little girl who sees the books each morning prefers more purely fantastic things. Her especial joy is 'Arlequin marie sa fille.' Here they all are, the crippled Notary, the one-eyed Mayor, Columbine, Polichinelle, the bridegroom Pierrot:

Arlequin marie sa fille,
Grosse et grasse et bien gentille,
Il lui donne en marriage,
Du pain sec et du fromage
Et du sel plein son sabot,
Ah ! riguingette ! ah ! riguingo !

Through the Fronde, through the wearisome controversies of the Jansenists, through the Bull Unigenitus, through the magniloquent versification of Racine and Corneille, these puppets played.

The nurse, la nourrice, in her blue apron and white coiffe, incarnates in herself the gaiety and sanity of the French people. She has preserved and handed down from generation to generation all this traditional nursery lore. She sits by the baby in the great wooden cradle, which has itself come down from the time of Henri Quatre and St. Francis de Sales, and tells stories of brigands, and sings her berceuses. Her stories change like pictures in the fire, when a mulberry tree of flame around which children dance turns into a ruined Arch of Caracalla, under which bandits go. She tells of Floribert and Margot, who climbed up the bell-rope into

the belfry on Easter Eve, when all the bells of Christendom leave their towers and fly to Rome. The air is full of them as of birds or bees. The weathercock flies before them, as the children ride through the air on the great bell. More thrilling still is the story of the old woman whom the brigands cut in two and throw into the fire, and who jumps up and dances amid the flames. Pomme d'Api carries her father's dinner through the woods, where all sorts of fungi, champignons, and chanterelles, and cèpes, and mousserons grow at the foot of the trees. Under the mushrooms live tiny elfin men. She tells, too, the history of the Princess Liseron, who fell among the snails :

> Adieu, mon pauve Père,
> Le Roi des Escargots
> M'a fait prisonnière,
> Et je mourrai bien tôt.

So she sings, and the baby sleeps. All these things, and many others, may be read of in these delightful books.

DICKENS IN REAL LIFE

THERE is a sentence in Mr. Chesterton's new volume of 'Criticisms and Appreciations of the Works of Dickens' (published by Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons) which appears to me to show the great mark of genius—the faculty for seeing things as they are—in a very high degree. I have been moved to this reflection by the following passage, which is so entirely true and so really illuminating that I make no apology to the reader for quoting it in full:

> If we begin again to behold the English people, it will be the final vindication of Dickens. It will be proved that he is hardly a caricaturist; that he is eeally something very like a realist. Those comic monstrosities which the critics found incredible will be found to be the immense majority of the citizens of this country. . . . For the exaggerated notion of the exaggeration of Dickens (as was admirably pointed out by my old friend and enemy, Mr.

Blatchford, in a *Clarion* review) is very largely due to our mixing only with one social class, whose conventions are very strict, and to whose conventions we are accustomed. In cabmen, in cobblers, in charwomen, individuality is often pushed to the verge of insanity. But as long as the Thackerayan platform of gentility stood firm, all this was, comparatively speaking, concealed. For the English, of all nations, have the most uniform upper class, and the most varied democracy. . . . In England, while good form restrains and levels the universities and the army, the poor people are the most motley and amusing creatures in the world, full of humorous affections and prejudices and twists of irony. . . . *The democracy is really composed of Dickens's characters;* for the simple reason that Dickens himself was one of the democracy.

This passage is really the last word of criticism on Dickens. He was the infinitely keen-eyed, alert, sensitive, sympathetic, responsive recorder of the life going on around him, the jolly robustious life of the old-fashioned people of England, still going on persistently, in spite of all depressing and alien influences, much as it had done in the days of Pepys. For Dickens is England. In this paper, with the reader's permission, I will hardly mention Dickens or any of his

characters again—at least, not the characters which have got into his books, but rather speak of some of those I have met with outside. For they are all Dickens characters.

My own case cannot be singular, but it seems to me that all my life I have been holding desultory conversations with Dickens's characters. From parents and grand-parents I heard, in earliest days, stories of other generations of Dickens's characters, so that the people known and heard of mingle in my mind in a long Dickens procession, reaching to the very beginning of the nineteenth century. I will here put down at random some of these reminiscences, as one deals a well-shuffled pack of cards. The cards to be drawn from are innumerable. There was the showman, legendary in the family, who used to say, 'Now, you boys and girls that haven't got any ha'pence stand aside, and let the little dears walk up.' In the narrations, this showman used the Sam Weller 'v.' 'Here's Napoleon Buonaparte, my little dears,' he would say, 'or the Duke o' Vellington, vichever you like.' There was, in my own

memory, old Quiddy Williams, a perfectly bald-headed old woman, who sold bull's-eyes—probably called 'Quiddy' from her habit of constantly chewing a quid of tobacco. There was the Watkins family, who boasted that every Saturday night their mother bought a pound of the best bees'-wax to put in their ears. There was Mrs. Coke, who, on any temporary escape of Coke from his domicile, would hurry into the street, holding an untied bonnet string with one hand, and button-hole every passer-by with the enquiry, 'Have ye seen Coke? Has anybody seen Coke? Oh! here's Bill Ockenden. Have ye seen Coke, Mr. Ockenden?' They sent her round to all the wrong public-houses. There was a still earlier figure, a Mrs. Dyer, who, in like manner, paraded the streets during a time of some disturbance, saying, 'Have the mob got Dyer?'—Dyer at that moment being probably comfortably drinking in the New Inn. There was Mrs. Coke's mother, who told fortunes and exercised the craft of the professional scribe. There was Mr. and Mrs. Dinwiddy, old campaigners, whom we

looked on with great awe. Mrs. Dinwiddy said that the open sea was 'the queerest place she'd ever been in in her life.' On an aunt of my own writing a letter for her to her man at the war, Mrs. Dinwiddy remarked, 'Raley, mum, it's pretty near as well as I could do it myself,' and seized a pen and blotted the paper from top to bottom, saying, 'it makes it look more writingified.' There was Bullen, the newly-appointed police constable, who, accompanying a band of young sparks on their nightly revels, when one of them threw a stone through a window where they saw a lady brushing her hair, remarked, 'Really if you gentlemen are going on like this, I'd better walk a little behind.' The young sparks on this occasion thought the wisest thing to do was to offer a five-pound note to the local lawyer. 'You see, Harding's a man with a good deal o' power.' The lawyer pocketed the money, and on assurances of future good behaviour, solemnly gave it as his opinion that this, to him hitherto unknown, event would not be heard of again. There was old Mrs. Breese,

who at her tea-parties used to have loaf sugar on the tea-table and a pot of coarse brown between her knees, from which latter receptacle she popped a spoonful into the cups when nobody was looking. There was a very red-faced Bumble-like relieving officer who always read through the local paper, advertisements and all, twice every Sunday. There was a very foolish and loquacious sea-captain who used to say 'I likes a generous man—a man as'll treat himself to a pint o' beer.' The sermons of the Vicar himself were not without a certain farcical element, highly denunciatory, for the most part, albeit he was the kindest of men. 'Talk about 'em giving a tenth,' he would say, on the sore point and frequent topic of the collections, 'why, they won't even give a fifth.'

When the elder Mr. Weller says at the tea meeting, 'The young 'ooman next me 'as 'ad eleven cups, and she's a swellin' wisibly before my very eyes,' the fastidious reader exclaims, 'absurd exaggeration—not even amusing.' It may not be amusing (for my own

part it amuses me extremely), but I entirely deny that it is exaggerated. People may confine themselves to two cups of tea or any other liquor; it is quite certain their neighbours will say they take eleven. 'I was in the "Anchor" for a few minutes the other night,' said my own landlady, a year or two ago, 'and whilst I was there Mrs. Lipscomb and her son Jim came in. If you'll believe me, before they left, Mrs. Lipscomb had nine whiskies, and Jim, being a strict teetotaler, had nine glasses o' port wine.' In the matter of food and drink the English people have a large and spacious imaginativeness, and in nothing does Dickens more faithfully reflect them than in his delighted dwelling upon meals. They revel in stories of hospitality and conviviality. They are a perfect Dumas père in their love of largeness and profusion. In these popular narrations there is always something large, farcical, and extravagant. The woman mentioned above would describe her experiences as cook with a somewhat bibulous but very generous lady. 'Many's the time,' she would say 'I've had to throw

bottles of very old port wine down the sink—burgundy too—that she'd sent out. I really could not drink them, and I knew the poor thing 'ud be that hurt if she knew I hadn't. "Alice," she'd say of an afternoon, "go to Collis's and bring two dozen oysters on the deep shell, and I'll open two bottles o' stout and cut some brown bread and butter, and we'll have a snack."' In the same place she herself always ate three pounds of mutton for dinner on a Saturday. The lady and gentleman never had the joint in again. 'No vegetables,' she would add finely, 'a little jelly or chutney.'

This respect for good cheer has been the unchanged characteristic of the English people from the days of Chaucer's Franklin, 'within whose house it snowed meat and drink.' Mr. Wardle only carried on the tradition. The miserly starveling is the one character the English people hold in derision. I remember a legend of a host who gave a fireless supper party on a freezing winter night, and handed round blankets to the assembled guests as a kind of wedding

garment. 'She belongs the hermit tribe,' I have heard a workman say about a somewhat penurious lady, and there could be no greater condemnation. Similarly, 'There's none o' that meagre about 'im,' in their mouths is the highest praise. The following story which I heard told with great gusto, the other day, is very typical of the old-fashioned Dickens England. A rough old farmer, used to very plain living, was admitted at the Inn as a great favour, to dine with a 'gentleman from London.' The gentleman was very airy and patronising. 'I don't know what you do in the country,' he said, 'but we London people always reckon to have a bottle of sherry with our dinner.' The farmer readily assented and they finished the bottle between them. 'We London people,' said the gentleman again, 'reckon to have a bottle of port with the dessert.' The farmer was perfectly willing, and this bottle also was drunk. 'We London people,' said the gentleman, 'aren't in the habit of stinting ourselves in our wine.' A second bottle of port was ordered and

consumed. 'What do you say to a little more wine?' said the gentleman. The farmer was now surprised, but still he assented. The gentleman from London got up to ring the bell, and fell in a heap on the floor. 'Take that drunken feller away,' said the farmer to the waiter, 'and bring me some more wine.'

With all that, there is in the true English people a Sir Thomas Browne-like love of solemnities and serious things. Mr. Mould, the human wood-pecker, tapping his hollow tree is as great a favourite as Mr. Wardle. 'I always think a Confirmation is *so* solemn,' said a young lady yesterday to myself, 'it was most unfortunate those two boys laughed, as it *is* so solemn. It's really next to a funeral, and I always think it's almost *quite* the same as a funeral.'

Akin to this is that sense of retributive justice which they feel so strongly. With regard to any really notorious wrong-doer, they are like spectators sitting at a mediæval miracle play of the Last Judgment. When quite a child I remember hearing a woman say of some bad character who had died:

'If there's anything in what we're told, we knows very well where he's gone to.' The following example of the same thing—some readers will find it painful—occurred quite recently. A servant of a friend of my own had been away attending the death and burial of her father. The father had been an unmitigatedly bad lot—a black sheep of the deepest dye. 'If you'll believe me, mum,' the girl declared, 'after father'd passed, the smell o' sulphur was something awful. It was hours before we could get it out o' the house.' This is the reverse side of the intense hatred of the English populace for cruelty and oppression of any kind. This feeling, which often takes mistaken forms, as assaulting sorely tried schoolmasters, is at bottom altogether sound and good. It is exactly reflected in the so-called 'humanitarianism' of Dickens. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, in one of whose novels, if I remember right, a clean white man, an earnest servant of the God of battles, gouges out a dirty native's eye, never could be popular in England as Dickens is.

In their general characteristics, the English people are still the people Dickens drew. Since his time there has been much drilling, lecturing, marshalling, ticketing, tabulating, scrubbing, and white-washing of the poor. An alien language has been thrust upon them from without, and they no longer speak the old racy speech his characters spoke. Nowadays, for instance, nobody says, 'The whole box and dice of them,' that most apt and expressive figure. A generation has grown up which has never seen a dice box. Perhaps it is as well. The most important thing that has happened in England since Dickens's time is probably the recovery of an intellectual and imaginative apprehension of Catholicism. Numbers of English people, among them Mr. Chesterton himself, have looked through an open gate fast closed to their fathers, and caught glimpses of wonder and beauty Dickens never saw. But the vast mass of the people have been entirely unaffected by this, as Dickens was himself. They are still in the main as he knew them. They have the same love of pomp and

profusion, the same sense of solemnity, the same feeling for justice, the same hatred of cruelty, the same dislike of meddlesome restrictions. They are probably the most humane people in the world. From the free soil of this 'common people' of the old untrammeled England there sprang such flowers as 'The Ancient Mariner,' and 'The Fighting Téméraire' and 'The Old Curiosity Shop.'

A PRINCE OF MYTH-MAKERS

I REMEMBER an extremely idle and dreamy small boy being frequently accused by teachers and governors of 'wool-gathering.' He was never able to enter very thoroughly into their point of view, as, in spite of all their instructions, wool-gathering seemed to him the one thing worth doing. The remarks which grown-up people, in their conversation, only made in passing, the subjects which they referred to lightly, and then did not touch again, any reference to which they seemed to regard as a monetary condescension and unbending from the contemplation of really important things, were to him precisely the subjects of an absorbing and enduring interest. This was particularly the case with all matters connected with the changing panorama of the seasons, the

lengthening January days, the magical fogs of November, the coming and going of the birds, all the choir of bees and wasps and butterflies assisting at the drama of the year. These things seemed to have an importance and reality in themselves that grown-up people did not ascribe to them. To this temperament all sorts of objects bring with them a whole train of associations. A swallow flies past the window at which the small boy sits listlessly thumbing a dog's-eared Euclid, and his soul is with all swallows in their Mediterranean flight; a frog croaks, and he hears the croaking of all frogs—in the hot Italian night there rises from campagna and maremma the chorus of all the frogs of Mantua and Ferrara and Ravenna, and of all the marshes in the world.

This temperament is completely expressed in Hans Andersen's 'Fairy Tales.' Hans Andersen was the child who never grew up, who never lost the child's absorption in the spectacle of the world, the aspects of the year; who found in these things, not a passing relaxation from more important

themes and duties, but a perennial source of interest and delight. One feels that to the end of his days the dressing of the village pump with straw in late October would have been to him, not a simple utilitarian precaution, but the emergence of a new personality on the scene of the village world, or the dressing up of a friend for some delightful masquerade. Moreover, the straw-covered pump would bring its host of associations with it. It would stand in the village street as a visible symbol, perpetually evoking the whole poetry of winter. All his readers know the enchantment which he feels, and which, unfailingly, he makes them feel in, say, the early lighting of the street lamps on the first chill evenings. The ordinary man may say in passing: 'How pleasant it is to see the lamplight again,' but the child, and Andersen, the child of genius, falls into a very reverie of lamplight. The scenery of the play for him is not mere negligible trapping, but is endowed with a strange vivid life of its own. The theatre itself is a drama.

Andersen was a child of genius, a myth-

maker of genius. The old popular myth-makers were not men of genius. They exercised half-consciously what was once a normal human faculty. Andersen possessed, in addition to this faculty, a strange, wistful humour, a certain gentle bitterness which is not so much modern as unique. There never was anybody else who could have written 'The Flying Trunk.' It is a pleasure to name the story of the merchant's son, who, having spent all his fortune except four shillings, and having no other clothes but a dressing-gown and a pair of slippers, flew in the flying trunk to Turkey, where everybody was dressed in the same way as himself. The Turks, for joy of his exploit, jumped so high that their slippers flew about their ears. 'I myself saw the Turkish Angel,' said one; 'he had eyes like shining stars, and a beard like foaming water.' 'He flew in a fiery mantle,' said another; 'the loveliest little cherubs looked out of its folds.'

But, apart from his genius, Andersen's mind and whole outlook on the world was that of an imaginative child, or that of the

old unknown popular myth-makers. The true myth-maker endows animals and birds with personality; indeed, can hardly help thinking of them as human persons in disguise. In their strange and beautiful trappings they assist as actors in the human drama. To Andersen it is the most natural thing in the world that the queen bee should lead out her swarm to sting the murderer to death. There is, perhaps, no better example of this than the story of the 'Wild Swans.' 'The eleven brothers were princes, and went to school with stars on their breasts, and swords at their sides. . . . Their sister Elisa sat on a little stool of glass, and looked at a picture book which had cost half the kingdom.' Everyone knows how the wicked stepmother turned the princes into wild swans, and drove their little sister from the door. She finds the swan brothers, who tell her how once a year it is permitted them to visit their home. They may stay for eleven days, and fly over the green wood from which they can see the castle in which they were born, and in which their father dwells, and

the high church tower, where their mother lies buried. One thinks of the exiled king in Virgil, who, changed into a bird, fluttered over his own palace roofs.

Infelix tecta sua supervolaverit alis.

In all Andersen's wonder-world there is no greater enchantment than that of the migration of the birds. The birds of his tales are the stork and the swallow. He is never tired of watching them, of telling of their journeys. Life could have had no greater pleasure or interest for him than the return of the storks to Europe from their minarets and palm trees, and their early autumn flight from Holland, and Lorraine, and Alsace on the Feast of the Assumption.

This was, no doubt, the popular feeling for birds and beasts when the whole people was one great myth-maker. The stories of bird transformations did not seem grotesque, but sprang up spontaneously everywhere. 'They say the owl was a baker's daughter,' says Ophelia in the play. The story was that Our Lord one day asked bread at a baker's

door, and that the loaf put into the oven for Him grew and grew to such a size that the baker's daughter took for herself first half, and then the whole, and immediately was changed into an owl, henceforth to mourn for her sin. Precisely the same story is told in Norway of the spotted woodpecker, called the 'Gertrude bird.' Gertrude was, of course, the name of the baker's daughter. This calling of birds and beasts instinctively and naturally by some human name is of the essence of fairy tales and myth-making. The very name of the spotted woodpecker, of the 'Gertrude bird,' calls up scenes that positively make one's mouth water. One sees the village in the far North, the great pine-woods, Gertrude-haunted, the rushing waterfall, the little wooden house, the table spread for children with bilberries, dewberries, cloudberries, with brown bread and cream and honey, the old white-haired nurse who leaves her spinning-wheel to tell them stories in the long bright evening.

From such a nurse Andersen must have heard the old northern stories, the bare

material of which he afterwards embroidered and transfigured with his own lambent fancy and humour. We are curiously remote from the days of myth-making. Our people have long lost the faculty. Yet it sometimes seems that there is something in the language which the 'common people' speak, the older people who have not been to board schools, and read cheap newspapers with difficulty, that is akin to the world of fairy tales. It has the simplicity and directness, as well as the leisurely redundance, of the old myths. They say, for instance, 'afeared,' the participle that simple people naturally use, not the bookish word 'afraid.' How much better fitted it is for the use of natural men! 'I am afraid that Mrs. Travers-Smith will come to tea' is all very well—it is the right word to describe such an apprehension, but 'I am afeared' means 'fear is on me.' This is the fear of the Psalms, the fear felt by the men who made the word 'fear'—fearfulness and a horrible dread, fear of what men may do unto me, fear of the judgments that are far above out of my sight, fear of what may befall me

in the darkness and cold of the valley of the shadow of death. This, too, in a measure is the fear of fairy tales, the fear that overtakes the traveller in dark pine forests, the deep German woods, on heaths and moors, and lonely places. 'Musicianers' is a beautiful example of popular language which I happened to hear the other day. How banal in comparison is the correct word 'musicians!' 'Musicians' are people who perform at expensive concerts under the Dome at Brighton—'musicianers' are minstrels who sing the songs of home before the prison bars of captive kings. The landlord of a village inn will speak of a German band as 'these here musicianers,' using the infinitely convenient idiom, the '*çi*' or '*là*' suppressed in literary English. Nothing probably has done more to destroy the faculty of myth-making than the loss by the people of their own natural and proper language. It was, no doubt, in a very homely, local tongue that Andersen's nurse taught him the old Norse stories, and told him about the birds and their flight to the 'warm countries.'

PIERROT

THERE is so much to say about Pierrot that one does not know where to begin. For instance, Pierrot makes one think of Goldoni, and one rummages among one's shelves in vain. The only book one lays one's hand upon is a collection of "Commedie Scelte." They are very select indeed. The editor says, apologetically (sometime about 1801), that the Venetians, for whom Goldoni wrote, greatly delighted in hearing their own dialect, 'il loro gergo.'

> Il celebre Autore è stato costretto per accomodarsi al genio della sua Patria, di scrivere alcune parti in gergo Veneziano, come quelle dell' Arlecchino, Pantalone, Brighella, ed altre.

He goes on to say that he has chosen only the comedies 'scritto in mero e netto Italiano.' But the true Goldoni comedies, like 'Le Chiozzote Baruffe,' are written in

Venetian. 'Beautiful Goldoni,' Carlyle somewhere says; yes, indeed; who would not rather have been Goldoni than Carlyle?

Pierrot, as far as his nationality was concerned, is certainly a Venetian. He belongs to the delightful troupe of the 'Commedia dell' Arte,' Arlecchino, Pantalone (this is Pantaloon, let us always remember the Saints —they are at the bottom of everything—that San Pantaleone, whose brow an angel wiped during his torment); they are all Venetians. But out of all this troupe, let us think of Pierrot himself. His story has recently been told delightfully in a little book, published by Messrs. Herbert & Daniel ('The Story of Pierrot,' by S. R. Littlewood). We all know Pierrot, the white boy, the infinitely attractive, touching figure, one of the most appealing figures surely which has ever flitted across the imagination of man. What an extraordinary degradation nigger minstrels are! The writer remembers a little girl who always spoke of a troupe of Pierrots as 'the white niggers.' Ah, Venetian poverello, amid the black crowd, white-souled Pierrot!

Before he was christened, Mr. Littlewood tells us, as an ancient Roman player, he was a mime, performing in dumb show. He would make great play with his hands, no doubt—with all his thumbs and fingers, pollice, indice, medio, quarto, mignolo. How full Dante is of the play of thumbs and fingers! ('Ombre mostrommi e nominolle a dito.' [Inf. v., 68] and 'mi posi il dito su dal mento al naso' [Inf. xxv., 45]). But all this Southern play of gesture would be nothing compared with the changing expression of his mobile, sensitive, suffering face. I remember my own first play. I was about eleven, and was staying at Brighton with good, kind, hospitable friends. I saw Phelps, then in extreme old age, as Cardinal Wolsey. A somewhat convivial and hilarious uncle conducted me to the theatre with his own children. We sat in the pit, and ate oranges, the uncle and myself, and Maude and Frank. We saw the great genius, and also a ranting, spangled troupe that thrilled our souls. There must indeed have been something delightfully restful in the old well-known

troupe of characters appearing in endlessly new and diversified situations — Arlequin, Pantaloon, Columbine, Pierrot: this last the most sympathetic of them all. In Molière he appears as 'a country lad.' He is generally called 'Gilles' in old French plays. To myself, also, 'Giles' seems an admirable name for him, and Columbine should be called 'Barbara.' He walked out with her seven years and a half; this was the happiest time of his life. I do not forget his many escapades, but I always see him with a shining fidelity in his dark eyes.

Yes, one loves Pierrot, the country lad, honest and kindly, with butterfly thoughts and a heart of gold. He is something of a simpleton. He is sure to get into trouble, but to him everything will be forgiven; he is a little 'soft,' 'un grand Nicodème,' as they said in old France, of course from the words of the Gospel about Nicodemus, 'an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile.' He, indeed, is guileless, he thinks little about the main chance, he is by no means the up-to-date, wide-awake young man. He is shy, naïve,

artless, wistful; unkind people might say he is not quite all there. The butterfly thoughts often remain in the chrysalis stage, and this from his earliest days. Yet from a boy Pierrot was a player of pranks. It was he who pinned the Knave of Hearts to the tail of Uncle Pyke's brown roquelaure ('rockielow,' the old gentleman called it who lately told the tale) as he sallied forth, according to his invariable custom, to attend the Wednesday evening service in the Baptist Chapel in Old Bridge Street. But Pierrot was never the mere heartless jester. He was never the egoist that women worship; he was always something of a cry-baby, a creature of quickly changing hopes and fears; he suffered when flouted by Columbine.

Spite of his long dumbness, Pierrot became the 'fante,' as Italians call the knave at cards, the speaking being, the 'essere parlante,' in one word 'the man.' What an unknown depth of shy, sensitive life goes on under the visible exterior of the 'knave,' the 'valet,' the 'man'! Human life, with its grotesque pathetic fortunes, was continually presented

to the sympathy of gentle and simple, by the strolling comedians and puppet players. They roamed the roads of the world, they played in market towns, Cervantes and Santa Teresa met them on their dusty journeys. There is no work greater than the quickening of human sympathy, the strengthening of human vision. This is the work of strolling players, burattini, fantoccini, puppet plays.

Only Hans Andersen can duly write of Pierrot. In Andersen's tales the moon looks down on Courts and Kings and cities, and on Pierrot lying awake and sighing for Columbine. In our own time we feel there is a spirit astir that is not friendly to Pierrot, nor to Punch and Judy. Stern, incessant warfare is waged by Boards of Guardians and by County Councils on all old-world customs, on all simple, spontaneous, natural human things. As I write I take up the daily papers at random. I read :—

> The Bury St. Edmunds Town Council has decided that Christmas "waits" shall not be allowed to play in the streets after 1 A.M., and to instruct the police to put down the nuisance of children singing from door to door.

On the next page I find an old man summoned for crying 'Firewood!' in the street, and another for shouting 'Shrimps!' and 'Celery!' Both these delinquents were fined.

It will go hard, one fears, with Punch and Judy, and what remains of all the characters of the 'Commedia dell' Arte,' with Arlecchino, Pantalone, Brighella, Spavento, with the Doctor of Bologna, with Columbine and Pierrot, at the hands of all these people dressed in a little brief but mischievous authority. The bigots of our iron time have called their harmless art a crime. There is a list of books printed at the end of the delightful little sketch of which I have been speaking, illustrating the great humane tradition of amusement, handed on from age to age, which I am tempted to quote entire. I will mention only one, published in 1838, the 'Memoirs of Grimaldi,' by Charles Dickens. Goldoni, Andersen, Dickens,—how they all loved the things now being hustled from the world, the things which we shall remember when we are so old that we have forgotten the Psalms.

THREE JINGLE-MAKERS

LET me begin with a jingle of my own by way of a text:

Men take their pleasures variously, but few greater
pleasures I know
Than the jingles of Mr. Kipling, and Mr. Belloc also.

With these two a third name should be associated, that of Mr. Chesterton. With some superficial differences all three possess the temperament of the jingle-maker in perfection. The word is here used with no shadow of disrespect. The jingle-maker is not in the great sense a poet, but even to those who appreciate both, his rhymes sometimes give a greater delight than is afforded by the poetry of poignant emotion or sustained thought. He is the jongleur, the improvisatore, the minstrel, the rhymer. He made the nursery rhymes and the old Christmas

carols, he strung together the monkish rhymes of mediæval Latin hymns. In my own opinion there are two men at present living in this country who without any abuse of language may be called poets—Mr. A. E. Housman and Mr. W. B. Yeats. Mr. Housman, at once a poet and a jingle-maker, is a personage apart. The poetry of Mr. Yeats is fairy music, but he has not the peculiar gifts of the jingle-maker.

Mr. Chesterton, Mr. Belloc, and, above all, Mr. Kipling have in common, first of all, an abounding vitality. They frolic, they revel, they bubble over with boisterous high spirits and spontaneous good humour. Moreover, they all possess the true nursery rhyme spirit of seizing on the fact and going straight to the point. (Those whose lot it is, for instance, to attend meetings of Boards of Guardians may sometimes be tempted to wish that this spirit was more widely diffused. You may spend half an hour of a brisk October morning listening to the wearisome discussion of some trivial point which is afterwards found to have been already voted upon and

settled in July. If such bodies were obliged to carry on their discussions in rhyme, the outpouring of an immense amount of useless verbiage would be prevented, and the jingle-makers, the really practical people, would come by their own.) I well remember the impression produced on myself by Mr. Kipling's earliest stories — the sense of reading the books of someone who was really alive. Some who read these lines will no doubt recollect the word-pictures Dick draws for Maisie in 'The Light that Failed'—the green jade waterfalls, the rose-red cities, the tombs of kings. 'Millions of wild bees live up in the rocks.' One may read the wearisome pages of advanced writers on higher thought, higher education, eugenics and the like, and never get a hint or suspicion that such things or places exist in the world. Yet they do indeed, not only tubes and trams and model dwellings and mean streets, but 'the awful mountain and the lovely bay' as Macaulay says. Most modern thinkers see the world drab; Mr. Kipling, Mr. Belloc, and Mr. Chesterton, like three

Sienese painters, see it glowing with colour and gold.

They are all three Europeans—Mr. Kipling no doubt prefers the term 'white man.' They look upon life as good—our modern would-be Asiatics all more or less regard it as an evil. There is no blitheness in the dull censorious world of modern 'advanced' literature. It is bitter, cynical, pessimist. It grins and snarls and sneers. A convert to the Church once described to me his experience of Congregational and Unitarian chapels as 'sitting in a pit of ashes.' But the atmosphere of Puritanism is like an old English May Day compared to that of such a publication as, say, the *New Age*. One wonders who the abnormal beings are who spend threepence a week on this newspaper, and who persuade themselves that they enjoy it. Its satisfaction in ugliness (I do not say 'delight'—its writers appear incapable of pleasure), its disbelief in goodness, its dreary aloofness from everyday humanity, its ridiculous absorption in the talkee-talkee of a small literary clique are all most curious. The world of the jingle-maker

is sane and healthy and human—it is not darkened by 'problems.' Read 'Sir Richard's Song' in 'Puck of Pook's Hill' to get the taste of problems out of your mouth. People who do not like this little poem must be unhealthy and unhappy people:

As for my father in his tower,
Asking news of my ships at sea;
He will remember his own hour,
Tell him that England has taken me.

As for my mother in her bower,
That rules my father so cunningly;
She will remember a maiden's power,
Tell her that England has taken me.

As for my brother in Rouen city,
A nimble and naughty page is he;
But he will learn to suffer and pity,
Tell him that England has taken me.

It must be admitted that Mr. Kipling's exuberance sometimes spoils his poetry. The first four lines, for instance, of each verse of 'The Looking Glass' in 'Rewards and Fairies' would by themselves have made a perfect ballad—the effect is lost through the two redundant additional lines. Why, again,

to mention a very small matter, does he write the word 'and' as 'an''? This spoils, at least to the sight, the enchanting line:

Oh! Firle and Ditchling and ships at sea.

This last line shows the characteristic of the jingle of being something of a catalogue, a string of beautiful words or names, one image calling up or suggesting another, perhaps a string of relationships—father, mother, sister, brother, following one another like the beads of a rosary as in mediæval ballads, or simply the presentation of a series of pictures, as in nursery rhymes. The very spirit of nursery rhymes indeed lives in Mr. Kipling:

Four-and-twenty ponies
Trotting thro' the dark,
Brandy for the parson,
'Baccy for the clerk.

This, and again, 'How far is St. Helena?' has the true ring in it.

The pleasure given by jingling rhymes is akin to the pleasure given by gay colours. Those who feel the one pleasure strongly usually feel the other in an equal degree.

Mr. Chesterton 'sits in the saddle and sings his song,' and sheds tears as a piece of coloured stone evokes the vision of the old barbarically gilded Glastonbury. He and Mr. Belloc and Mr. Kipling all prefer sounds and colours to abstractions. The tinkling rhymes of mediæval hymns and the bright colours of mediæval pictures seem both especially Christian things:

> Veni, Sancte Spiritus
> Et emitte cœlitus
> Lucis Tuæ radium

is a jingle. How refreshing it is after the ære perennius classical poetry! It is like the sound of vernal showers on the twinkling grass. It is indeed the plentiful rain that came down on the inheritance, refreshing it when it was weary. The invention of rhyme and the delight in it was the sign of the world's new birth, of men becoming as little children.

Mr. Kipling, like Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc, is romantic, pre-Raphaelite, Christian. At least one vehemently suspects Mr. Kipling of being a Christian—Mr. Chesterton and

Mr. Belloc constantly proclaim the fact of their being so. At any rate, he is a true Romantic and pre-Raphaelite. He looks at things with his own eyes. He gives no vague classical generalities, but calls each actual flower by its own lovely name. He sees

Winter's bee-thronged ivy bloom

with the two eyes in his own head. He sings of the herbs of the field:

Excellent herbs had our fathers of old,
Excellent herbs to heal their pain,
Alexanders and Marigold,
Eyebright, Orris and Elecampane,
Basil, Rocket, Valerian, Rue
(Almost singing themselves they run)
Vervain, Dittany, Call-me-to-you,
Cowslip, Melilot, Rose-of-the-sun,

or (another catalogue), the lovely verse:

Buy my English posies,
Kent and Surrey May,
Violets of the Undercliff,
Wet with Channel spray.

He has the romantic joy in common things, the Gothic love of birds and beasts felt by

the carvers of choir stalls and cathedral porches. 'He will come back like a bat to his belfry' he will say. This is Christian, too. To the modern progressive a candle, for instance, is something to be superseded as soon as possible by some mechanical form of illumination, to the old-world Christian it was the taper that St. Joseph holds in Hans Memling's picture of the Nativity, it was the waxlight in Heine's poem which the Mother took, and made of it a heart.

Mr. Kipling, Mr. Belloc, and Mr. Chesterton, all three, exalt the normal healthy man, and defend him from the attacks and prohibitions of the superior person. Like Tithonus, they themselves wish to differ 'in nothing from the kindly race of men.' They all believe that amid immense exterior differences things are substantially the same in all times and places. This is also the underlying thought of nursery rhymes and the secret of their charm. 'How many miles to Babylon?' delights us by its suggestion of English children innocently asking the way in a time and country of

incredible remoteness. We shiver with a sense of strangeness as we think of a future Europe at the inconceivable distance of five hundred years. What conquests of the air, what communication with other planets will have been attained! Yet the years will go steadily and surely on, as they have done since 1411, and Man will be the same. Mr. Belloc believes that salvation is only to be found in doing what healthy natural men have done ever since the Flood, 'worshipping God, hunting wild animals, and drinking wine with their food.' As far as the worship is concerned, be holds that there is a normal European form of it:

> But Catholic men that live upon wine
> Are deep in the water and frank and fine,
> Wherever I travel I find it so;
> Benedicamus Domino.

Hence he hurls jingling defiance at all schismatical faddists:

> Heretics all, wherever ye be,
> At Nimes or Tarbes, or over the sea,
> You never shall hear good words from me.

The company of Christendom is represented by the village waits at Christmas who sing from house to house :

> Now these were Jews, as Jews must be,
> But Christian men in a band are we,
> Carillon, Carillà.

The attacks made on Christianity by Superior Persons indeed vary from time to time. We used to be told that it was a device of the rich to keep the poor in their places ; according to the newest illumination it is a subtle revenge taken by the poor upon the rich. But neither Rousseau nor Nietzsche has probably ever given much trouble to the ordinary healthy man after Mr. Belloc's heart. Let me try my hand at a jingle of my own in celebration of this hero, in the manner of Mr. Kipling, if it is not presumptuous to say so :

He eats his meat, he drinks his wine, he thrives upon his food,
He loves his lass, he sleeps o' nights a sleep as sound and good
As St. John sleeps at Ephesus, or the dormouse in the wood.

A TRACTARIAN MINSTREL*

It has sometimes occurred to me to question whether the style of Dr. Newman is not greatly over-rated. It is, no doubt, very noble English, but it seems, to me at least, to lack that element of magic so often ascribed to it. Be that as it may, when the 'Tracts for the Times' were appearing at Oxford they had no more appreciative reader than a Cambridge undergraduate who was afterwards to set forth their doctrines in prose, which I can only describe as the very romance of language. I do not think it possible to write better English than Dr. Neale did. Different as their subject matter is, the 'Sackville College Sermons' are in prose what the 'Shropshire Lad' is in poetry. It is impossible to define or analyse this magical

* *Letters of John Mason Neale.* Longmans. 10s. 6d. net.

charm. Its great characteristic is the entire absence of effort, any heaping up of words, any seeking after effect, any wearisome attempt at description, any labouring of the point, any working to a climax, any rhetorical or oratorical devices whatsoever. Quite simply, the Christian story possesses the writer of these sermons; he is filled with it. It speaks through him; it tells itself with an unfailing cadence, in words of the utmost simplicity, but of incomparable glamour and loveliness. It is like a lark's song, like a swallow's flight. He begins anywhere, he begins at once. He is at the heart of the matter in a moment. He tells things which have been told a thousand times, which we have heard from our cradles, but he never wearies. One is no more tired of reading him than of hearing larks sing or seeing swallows dart. 'Unwearied' is, indeed, the word for Dr. Neale himself. He begins a Good Friday evening sermon, after the prolonged exercises of Lent and Holy Week, with the words, 'Let us still go on with the story: it is good for us to hold us fast by God.'

He is indeed a minstrel, a singer. I suppose it is the fashion to call such writing as his naïve, mediæval, Primitive. Certainly it affects one in the same way as the old ballads, or some sincere piece of mediæval art. As I write, my eye falls on a prospectus of Mr. Coulton's 'Mediæval Garner,' with an illustration showing Noah building the Ark, with a piece of his history in Old French beneath it. 'Noë commence à charpenter' it begins, and it says that as he began to build, his first stroke was heard by all that were in the world. It seems that the first words of any of Dr. Neale's sermons were a cry that must have been heard by all who were in the world. He was the poet of the Tractarian Movement, so it seems to me. Indeed, I always think of Neale and his religion as a beautiful butterfly bursting from the chrysalis of Tractarianism. In this volume of his letters, collected by his daughter, Mrs. Lawson, one is conscious of a great difference between Neale and the ordinary Tractarian teachers. One can only think of him as a great 'Christian' doctor, living in

a region beyond partisan names and controversies.

The Editor, indeed, writes in her preface: 'His hatred of Protestantism may be misleading to the superficial reader.' In his letters, 'Catholic' is used for all that is beautiful and venerable; 'Protestant' for all that is mean and unworthy. Thus he stigmatises the undignified behaviour of some Portuguese nuns as 'Protestant'; while a beautiful oak wood is described as 'Catholic.' Such expressions occur on every page of this book. 'The Protestant valleys are the most miserable, cold, and ungodly looking places you can fancy.' On one of his many foreign tours an amusing episode occurred. A certain Pastor Sabrer, 'hearing that so celebrated a Protestant was in the hotel, accompanied by two other Protestant ministers,' sent and asked him to attend a meeting of the Consistory and express his ideas on the idolatry of the Corpus Christi procession to be held that day. 'I answered him in Latin, to what effect you may imagine.' 'Anglican,' again, is a term hardly less detested than 'Protestant.'

He says of the 'Anglican writers,' in a letter to his friend, the Rev. Benjamin Webb, 'You cannot abhor them more than I do.'

Yet, with all this, one sees on every page how far he was from those to whom the System is the first and essential thing. The Editor writes, 'Nor in his conversation with Nonconformists is it likely that controversial subjects were uppermost, for in his directions to the sisters of St. Margaret's he says: "You who have to do with the poor, this I would always advise you; talk as little of doctrinal points as you can."' After mentioning his 'one exception' to this rule (we are not told what it is), he adds, 'not even that in the last stage of disease: then speak only of our dear Lord, Who is so much more merciful to us than we are to each other.' . . . His daughter gives a glimpse of his own ministrations in the sick room. 'My father called me to go with him to visit her' (one of the college pensioners), 'and to act as his little clerk by saying the responses. I accompanied him in mingled pride and trepidation. But, after all, he only read a prayer and a

verse or two, and explained to me afterwards that he found her too ill for more than that. I remember his repeating to her clearly and slowly the words he reminded her she knew so well: "In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted, let me never be confounded." And with these words he left her.' One feels that he went armed with all the 'Commendatory Prayers,' the migration of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, the three most atrocious torments of St. Thecla, and the rest, and found that he could not intrude them on that pathetic human helplessness.

The letters reveal, indeed, an extraordinary difference in mind and temperament between Neale and his correspondents—the Webbs, Boyces, and the rest. The Rev. Benjamin Webb, for instance, was unacquainted with the hymn, 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,' of which Neale had sent him a rendering. He 'did not know the original, but thought we should not borrow from heretics.' There was no Christian thing Neale did not know, no Christian cause with which he did not sympathise. One would

like to have his verses, 'In Memoriam (Abraham Lincoln), April 14th, 1865,' to which reference is made in a footnote. His opinion on the Crimean War is amusingly reflected in some verses of his little daughter, Agnes, on the Czar :—

> And when he next doth slay the Turks,
> May I be there to see his works.

The book is very good reading. The lists of foreign places he visited on his travels positively make one's mouth water. His true métier was perhaps that of a pilgrim, a vagabond of the Divine Love. He had a gift of tongues like that sturdy Protestant, George Borrow, or Richard Burton. One pictures him worshipping at the out-of-the-way shrines like Les Saintes Maries, or with the pilgrim crowd at Bom Jesus, or going from chapel to chapel on the Sacro Monte at Varallo, or amid a throng of Russian moujicks, say at Kieff or Moscow, following every detail of the gorgeous Liturgy of the East. The Eastern Church greatly attracted him.

Many charming glimpses of the human side of Neale are given, of which I have no room to speak. It is pleasant to think of his children, growing up in that intensely theological atmosphere, but yet not finding it irksome, in no way oppressed by it. 'Agnes is a delightful companion, uniting so much knowledge of what Protestants would call ecclesiastical rubbish of all sorts, with so much pure childishness in other directions.' 'Corny said the other day that, of the Three Persons of the Trinity, no one was *taller* than another.' Pleasant, too, are the glimpses we get of the College pensioners—Master Martin, and Master Chapman, and Master Trice. Old labouring men in Sussex were always spoken of as 'Master.' Neale was very fond of Sussex words and expressions, such as 'chavish' for the warbling of birds.

His was a most beautiful and enviable life. No shade of doubt or misgiving ever seems to have crossed his mind. He writes of the great Van Eyck at Ghent, 'I could look at the "Adoration of the Lamb" for ever.' He cared greatly for the things about which most

Englishmen care very little. In a village church known to me, the new incumbent has removed the 'Adoration of the Lamb' from the chancel, on the ground that 'it is calculated to give the villagers a wrong idea of their Christian Faith.' Poor fifteen-a-week villagers—poor Christian Faith!

ROMANCE IN ART AND RELIGION

IN the year 1798 a book was published, entitled 'Lyrical Ballads.' It contained among other poems 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and 'Tintern Abbey.' It was prefaced by an 'Advertisement,' in which the poets said—

> The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. Readers accustomed to the inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will perhaps have frequently to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness if they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. It is desirable that readers, for their own sakes, should not suffer the ordinary word poetry, a word of very disputed meanings, to

stand in the way of their gratification; but that while they are perusing the book they should ask themselves if it contains a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents; and if the answer be favourable to the author's wishes, they should consent to be pleased in spite of that most dreadful enemy to our pleasures, established codes of decision.

Now, this is talking. This is something worth saying, something worth doing; here are words that are things, words that are seeds. But how did it ever come to be supposed that 'the language of middle and lower-class people,' that is, of course, the language of ordinary life, the language of the craftsman and the husbandman, of the fields and open air, the language of people who made things and who saw things grow—the language in one word of real things and of the real world—was an unfit medium for poetry? Why had this language been displaced by a language the poets so accurately describe as inane—a language of vacuous, high-sounding abstractions, signifying, whatever people pretended, for the most part, literally nothing? How did a language of

convention ever come to take the place of a language of observation?

I have been moved to these reflections by reading the very interesting disquisition on mediæval art and religion in the chapter called 'Apples and Roses' in Mr. Godfrey Blount's recent book, 'The Blood of the Poor: an Introduction to Christian Social Economics' (Fifield). Mr. Blount is himself an artist whose delightful work is, it appears to me, filled with the finest qualities of 'mediæval,' or, as I should prefer to call it, 'romantic' art. I myself should define the romantic spirit as a spirit concerning itself with the real world, with real things, rather than with abstractions and speculations, and yet feeling these real, that is, tangible, visible, material, things as something more than themselves, as penetrated and illuminated by spiritual forces and powers.

There are three ways of looking at things open to us. There is the way indicated above, which is the way of romantic and mediæval art, of Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' and Millet's 'Angelus,' that is, looking at the

tangible, visible scene, occupying oneself with it, dwelling on it, delighting in it, not soaring into the vacuous inane of supposed superiority to ships and harvest fields, sailors and reapers; but yet to feel that all these scenes and people are set against a great mystical background. There is, secondly, the way of contempt for the common, visible, everyday things, the attributing of no real importance to the visible frame of the world, the aspiring to a spirituality which is not concerned with it, and to an art which is ideal as opposed to real. There is, lastly, the way of modern realism, and setting before us the facts and things unpenetrated and unilluminated, less and not more than themselves. Such is the way of modern plays by clever people, where some uninteresting story of sordid intrigue affects one precisely in the same way as the Sunday newspaper with its stories of squalid crimes and strings of frivolous 'facts.' I believe that Mr. Blount's analysis of the mediæval view of things is a perfectly true one, startling as it may appear to many who are accustomed to regard the Middle Ages

as a time given over to 'other-worldly' dreaming. He says, for instance:

> The mediævalist sees Heaven in a wild flower, not because there is a Heaven somewhere else which he thinks the flower must be like, but because the flower *is* Heaven to him. His only conception of Heaven is a heaven on earth, a field of flowers, of sunshine, and pretty things; his only conception of hell is a hell on earth, a hell of fire, and frost, and prison. It is we who have mistaken his pictures of real things, shiny fields and golden skies, and happy youths and beautiful maidens, or of unpleasant people and places for the inscrutable Paradise and Infernal Regions we pretend to believe in ourselves, which are both of them too indistinct for his matter-of-fact head to trouble about.

It must be remembered that the early and mediæval Christians attributed a cosmical significance—one is obliged to write this sort of jargon to express oneself—to their religion. In later times the earth, with its light of setting suns and the round ocean and the living air, was the scene of the Christian's probation, in which he had to make his fortune and to save his soul. To the saved soul it had no final significance. The soul's true home was an infinitely distant

heaven. But the patristic doctrine was that the earth itself would have its Purgatory and its Resurrection Morning. Dr. Neale, says somewhere, about the earth 'melting away,' that what is melted is not lost, it is but re-cast. The words of his hymn :—

> Shine forth and let thy Light restore
> Earth's own true loveliness once more,

must have sounded strangely to conventional Christians in the middle of the last century.

To the great romantic poets and artists—to Wordsworth, to Coleridge, to Turner, to Millet—as well as to the seventeenth-century mystics, like Traherne, Earth's own true loveliness had never been lost. They were all true mediævals (according to Mr. Blount's definition) in that any one of them might have taken as the text of all his preaching the words, 'Here or nowhere is the whole fact.' This faculty of seeing was, no doubt, once much more widely diffused among the whole mass of the people, before it was taken from them by a 'spiritual' religion and a mechanical civilisation. The reproach levelled

against mediæval Christianity that it was 'materialistic,' is, of course, true ten times over, but the mediævals believed that the spiritual was apprehended through the material, and that, indeed, there was no other way of doing it.

Romantic art, therefore, was a return to the concrete. In the Middle Ages everything was concrete. Think of the innumerable army of the similes of Dante—his continual 'come' ushering in some familiar homely sight or scene. The whole people dwelt among these material images which a spurious spirituality had not yet taught them to despise. They occurred to them constantly :—

Forth He came as light thro' glass,

says an old English carol, speaking of the Nativity. Another old carol, hitherto unknown to me, but which I see mentioned as being included in a new collection published by Mr. C. J. Sharp, speaks of the Saviour as crossing a ferry on a bridge 'made of the beams of the sun.' One opens one's mouth and draws in one's breath at such lovely thoughts and

imaginations. But there was a time when it was quite common for them to occur to the most ordinary people.

The only poetry which can ever be popular is poetry dealing with the simplest, the most tangible, palpable, visible things, and, at least in the writer's opinion, this is the only poetry that is really poetry at all. The great poet, the great myth-maker of old, was the people. Things like the legend of St. Christopher, almost as much as the Story of the Nativity itself, express essential truth and beauty, the heart of romance, the imaginative and spiritual life of the world. It was an evil day when, from whatever cause, the power of making and delighting in such things was lost, and the people were given instead the ability to read, say, the narrative of the hewing in pieces of Agag, accompanied by an inability to distinguish its spiritual value from that of the Story of the Passion.

I confess that to myself there is a difference in the look and sound of the most ordinary things, say, in a Tyrolese valley. By the mill-wheel amid green meadows, Saint

Catherine sits. The dice-box from which peasants throw in the Gasthaus is one of the Implements of the Passion. The cockcrow is a spiritual clarion waking souls asleep. This transfiguration and exaltation of common things is what one means by romantic art and religion. When Dr. Neale says in a Good Friday sermon 'The carpenters were already at work making His Cross,' all common things are at once lifted into a diviner air. The carpenters at work and all common-place, ordinary people about their every-day tasks are saving the world. Dickens, by the way, who showed the treasures of humanity and courage and tenderness existing in the despised 'common people' hitherto so contemptuously ignored, was a true 'Romantic.' I have sometimes wondered whether 'Christian,' 'romantic,' 'Gothic,' 'mediæval,' and 'Liberal' are not different names for the same way of looking at life.

Dickens at any rate warned people to be on their guard against the high-sounding abstractions so often pressed upon them as

being all-important. He would never have said that there is 'something better than happiness, namely, blessedness,' as though the saints were not the 'Bien-heureux,' the very happy. He knew that people absolutely need to be warmed and fed, and that all normal human beings want to have a good time. The mediævals were very frank in their confession of this last fact. The following sentence from Mr. Hueffer's latest novel delightfully expresses the mediæval point of view ;—

> In the spring the moles come out of the woods and the little birds sing, and we walk in the gardens and take what pleasure we can. And then comes the winter, and shuts us up in our castles, but with jongleurs and ballad-singers we pass the time as well as we may.

One great part of happiness, we may well believe, is the observation of birds and moles and country things. The old English language shows this—it is all country made. No modern town child could ever coin the phrase : 'At a snail's pace.' Snails do not progress down Tottenham Court Road, leaving a silver

track behind them. Nor would it occur to any town-bred watcher of the mystical dance of the snowflakes to say, 'It's the old woman plucking her geese.' In my own childhood the peculiar clucking of the hen after she had laid an egg was supposed to proclaim

> I've laid nine eggs, I've laid nine eggs,
> But yet I must go barefoot.

In our own time, fewer and fewer children see and hear these sights and sounds. I end with this because Mr. Blount's remedy for all evils, his hope of restoring a new and popular art, is a return to the country. This, I confess, is somewhat outside the scope of my own ordinary meditations, but it seems to me that Mr. Blount is very right. It is country people who make such poems as these two lines which I remember to have read somewhere—

> La terre a donc un jour de plus,
> On sent la bonne odeur de foin,
> Ave Maria !

COLOURLESS RELIGION

THE more one sees of the greyness and blankness of the lives of the English poor, the more one is led to lament the absence of the element of colour and brightness supplied by religion. It is one of the normal functions of religion to provide an immense background to life, to create an atmosphere, to bring something large and imaginative into the most contracted lives. Normally this is done for the mass of the people by their religion. In Holy Week, among a Catholic population, the events and persons of to-day are less real and living than that tremendous drama of two thousand years ago, which is touching the imagination and sympathy of multitudes. The whole population is in an immense theatre, sorrowing with Mary and detesting Judas.

What indeed is a religion without Feasts? A Feast is not a Bank Holiday, but the commemoration of some great event or deliverance, coming down through long ages, kept by generation after generation. This is so, not only in Christian lands, in Brittany and Ireland, in Spain and Russia, but among Jews and Hindoos and Mohammedans. How the Passover must have kept the Jews together! What Easter was to the mediæval Christian, Purim again is to the orthodox Jew. In many countries at this feast the Jews make and send to one another cakes called 'Haman's ears.' Haman is the execrated villain of the drama, as Judas is in Holy Week. It is good for people to be lifted above their merely personal experiences and the trivialities of every day, and united in an unselfish detestation of Judas or Haman or even Guy Fawkes.

Such memories appeal but little to the mass of the English people, whose religion is as colourless as Dr. Clifford himself could desire. This is their misfortune rather than their fault, and is no excuse for depriving

them of the last remnants of what they so greatly need. The ornaments on cottage walls tell their own tale. There is no Crucifix; no Palm Sunday spray of box or willow bears its green witness to good thoughts and wider things. A *bénitier* is a not infrequent adornment, but it is generally used as a pipe-stand. This agrees with what I was once told by an old soldier, describing his experiences in India. 'We're bringin' 'em into Christianity very fast in the Madras territory,' he said, 'they smokes their pipes the same as we do now.' Sometimes one sees cheap coloured prints of the Madonna, and the scenes of the Passion, bought from some wandering Italian or Savoyard, but they are evidently there merely as odds and ends, not as part of a system by which the people live. Old people are heard to say that 'the Saviour's Letter,' a framed and printed copy of the Epistle to Abgarus, King of Edessa, was once common in country cottages, but I have never had the good fortune to come across it. A small model of the instruments of the Passion under a glass case—the cross, the spear, the nails,

the hammer, the sponge, the ladder, even the cock—is occasionally seen. In remote districts of Yorkshire the people call it 'Jacob's Ladder.'

In Yorkshire and Lancashire indeed many customs remain which have long died out in other parts of England. One hears sometimes a rhyme giving the old popular names of the Sundays in Lent :—

> Tid-Mid and Misere,
> Carling, Palm, and Paste-egg Day.

'Tid-Mid' is Mid-Lent Sunday, the Mi-Carême, the joyful break in the long six weeks' gloom. It was called by the Church 'Lætare Sunday,' and on that day rose-coloured vestments were worn. In Lancashire it is 'Simnel Sunday,' and the shops are full of gaily decorated cakes, as it comes round. 'Carlings' are dried peas, which are eaten on Passion Sunday. 'Paste-egg Day' is a corruption of 'Pace-egg Day'—Pace is Easter in Scotch, and Northumbrian English. The fourteenth-century Scottish poet, Robert Henryson, makes the town mouse say to her

country sister, 'My Good Friday is better nor your Pace.' The rolling and tossing of the brightly coloured Easter eggs by the children is one of the events of the year in parts of the North of England. They are not seen south of York. The 'lifting' of the passer-by is another custom which is not yet extinct. We read of Edward II being 'lifted' by four ladies of the Court. It was in intention symbolical of the Saviour's Resurrection; but no doubt was looked upon as part of the 'Easter Laughter,' the 'Paschales Risus,' like the merry jests and pranks at Purim.

That the dying out of these commemorations and representations has weakened the hold of the people upon the facts of the Christian story no one can doubt. One has only to listen to the comments of our countrymen and of the Americans in foreign churches and picture galleries to see how slight is the knowledge possessed by many of them, not of the poorer classes only, of the great Christian facts. A tourist, pausing before a wayside Calvary and pointing to the figures standing on either side of the

Cross, has been heard to say, 'Mary Magdalene and Peter, I presume.' Truly amazing was the utterance of an American lady before a picture of the Last Judgment, at Florence, 'Is that Christ or the Virgin Mary in the middle? Oh! I suppose it's Christ—he's got a light mus-tash'! I have myself heard a lecturer in a provincial town, dilating on his experiences on the Rhine, describe a crucifix as 'the Virgin Mary stuck up on a cross.'

A Russian writer has given a vivid description of the custom of making 'a Jordan' in the frozen rivers on the Feast of the Epiphany. A hole is made in the ice, a cross is set up, and a dove cut out of ice is placed upon it. The artist is at work on the dove, surrounded by the help and sympathy of the whole village. 'All smile upon him, they sympathise, they praise Sergius, they feel that his art is not a personal matter, but one common to the whole people. Sergius himself may be insignificant, idle, drunken, a spendthrift, but when he stands with his colours and his circle in his hands, he is something

higher, a servant of God. . . . The day of the Feast arrives. The sun shines dazzlingly. The pealing of bells resounds above, a thousand heads are uncovered—a thousand signs of the cross. The cross and the dove send out such rays that it blinds one to look. Merciful God! How beautiful! Through the crowd runs a murmur of surprise and delight.' The whole scene is a capital illustration of the happiness the Church is always giving. This is a kind of joy of which there is very little in England. The wells have been stopped up. But something yet remains. The people still know the meaning of Christmas and Easter. How long they will continue to do so it is impossible to say, if the teaching of the Creed in the schools is to be supplanted by a rationalised Puritanism, a vague homeless religiosity. In a Church school known to myself there hung on the walls some S.P.C.K. coloured prints of the Annunciation, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Ascension. When the school passed into the hands of the county council they were at once removed. The principal

ornament of the walls is now a picture of the postman on his rounds. Being also a messenger, he was probably thought an appropriate substitute for Gabriel.

It is better for the mass of the people to have a religion which binds them all into one, and colours the whole of life. It is better that they should look over vast distances, and have windows opened on infinite things. The blocking up of these windows is what is to be dreaded. A Moslem child weeping for the sorrows of Hassan and Hussein at a Persian passion play possesses something wanting to the English elementary school boy whose mind is fed on *Scraps* and *Answers* and *Tit-Bits*. One is tempted to exclaim with Wordsworth :—

> Great God, I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.

THE EARLY MASTERS

It would seem that, once in the course of the Ages, a pure flower of joy sprang out of the dark earth. In the works of the early German and Flemish and Lombard Masters—of any pre-sixteenth century Masters, in fact—we get a glimpse of a world so much better than the real world, that it seems the latter must exist only to afford the materials out of which the world of the painters could be constructed. We all know that better country, that earthly Paradise of the old painters, where all fruits and flowers flourish together. We have seen the Holy Family rest on their flight into Egypt, under shaggy pine trees, by some brawling mountain stream, while the gay, stiff little angels, so alert and sincere, eternally unirritated and unfatigued, play bagpipes and offer cherries to the Child. I am

bound to confess—it is doubtless my limitation—that when in a picture gallery I leave all these things behind, and pass on to Flemish kermesses and naked nymphs, 'sea pieces' and battle scenes, powdered actresses, and vacant Royal children, a deep weariness falls on my spirit, and I feel that something is gone which is worth all the rest put together. Nothing makes up for the loss of these crude, naïve, sweet, childish things.

There surely could have been no happier life ever lived on earth than that of these old painters. They must have had a great gaiety of heart, a great blitheness of spirit, a great freedom from care, or, at least, power of detachment from it, to have painted as they did. 'Worry is the worst dog in the pack,' and it seems he must have been far from those who lingered with such delight on a goldfinch's feathers, or the white blossom and red fruit of the wild strawberries in the grass. It was surely in a golden, tranquil leisure that they painted all those details, the great pot of pinks by the bedside, the red and white silk of the diapered quilt, the scolloped valance,

and the carved Evangelists at the four posts of the bed on which the Virgin falls asleep, in her painless passage to her Son. It is strange to think of the old painter whose name and personality has been absorbed in this scene, and who is known to posterity only as 'le Maître de la Mort de Marie,' 'the Master of the Death of the Virgin.'

About these pictures, almost alone of the works of men, there is nothing acrid, nothing gloomy, nothing bitter. Good is evidently victorious, even in its moments of deepest adversity. The martyrdoms are triumphs—the St. Sebastian who stands up, 'as thick with arrows as an urchin is full of pricks,' has already his palm. Looking on the dragons and the executioners—

> We feel no horror, but delight,
> Because the colours are so bright,
> Likewise we note the specks of white
> And the great plates of burnished gold.

Compare an early Florentine or German 'Decollation of St. John,' with its ceremonious attendant angels, and air of unshaken faith in the triumph of righteousness, with a late

sixteenth century martyrdom, or one of Rubens's scenes of torture, or with the horrors of some Elizabethan tragedy, like 'Titus Andronicus,' and you will see the gloom that descended on the human mind with the passing away of all that sacred butterfly world.

The world of the old painters is a world of good will to men of good will. It is a world where the good are good, and the good are always the merry, and the gorgeous and the bright. The bad *are* bad, and their cruelty and treachery are so flagrant and patent that no one feels a pained and puzzled sympathy for them. The pilgrim Man is guided on his journey, as the angel guides the boy Tobias, and however badly things go wrong, they are not hopeless, and 'la misericordia divina ha si gran bracchia, che prende ciò che si rivolge a lei.' 'Reality is a mass hard to penetrate,' but the old painters penetrated it with the utmost ease. Fourteenth century writers of saints' lives often say in the course of their narration, 'it pleases me to think that it was so.' Above the earth is that heavenly court

to which so many ladies turned their thoughts in the hour of their abandonment and disillusion—a court where there are no rivalries and no heart-burnings, where the Queen Mother is beloved of all the servants of the King, where St. Catherine is not jealous of St. Margaret, and St. Mary Magdalene does not intrigue against St. John the Evangelist.

Which is the loveliest of all these pictures? Which would one choose if one could have but one? Some three or four stand out—the 'Adoration of the Lamb' at Ghent, Hans Memling's chasse painted with the story of St. Ursula in the Hôpital de St. Jean at Bruges, Carpaccio's 'Dream of St. Ursula' at Venice, and the Perugino triptych with Michael and Rachael in the National Gallery.

It can never be again, that April morning time. The following passage from a fourteenth century 'Life of St. Mary Magdalene' belongs to the world of the old painters, and is like one of their pictures in words. It shows the lovely thoughts which it was possible for men to have, amid all the wars and

tumults of the outer world. The scene is the house at Bethany, on the Morning of Palm Sunday. 'I think, that all that morning until tierce, the Magdalene was alert and watchful for the return of any one to tell her the news. . . . I think, that, at that hour, that is, about tierce, the messenger she had sent returned in great joy with a branch of olive in his hand, and he came to the Magdalene, and immediately she saw him, she thought he was bringing good news. And the messenger began to tell of the events of the Sunday of Olives, as it is told in the Gospel, how the populace of Jerusalem went out to meet Him with loud shouts of joy, escorting Him into the city, and taking off their garments, and casting them to the ground, and also branches of olive. "And behold, here is the sign; this branch of olive which I have brought is one gathered in honour of Jesus, and they cried with loud voices, 'Hosanna in excelsis!'" And I think the Magdalene, full of joy, took the olive branch and carried it to Madonna, and told her the tidings with great gladness; and His Mother rendered sweet thanks to God.'

THE ELOCUTIONIST AND THE RHAPSODIST

A WRITER in these columns recently stated that the poems of Miss Rossetti gave him 'the most poignant pleasure he could ever hope to receive from any of the arts or from life itself.' This may seem to some of us a little excessive; but there are not wanting those who would make the words their own, say, of Dante Rossetti's 'Sister Helen,' or the old Border ballads, or Shelley's 'Skylark' and 'West Wind,' or Coleridge's 'Christabel.' For the true lovers of these things life holds no more 'poignant pleasure.' One would add there is no pleasure so sane, so beneficent, so unselfish; no such escape from the prison of small personal worries in which so many of us are enclosed, as the escape which poetry gives. On the other hand, it must be

admitted that the capacity for feeling this pleasure is the very rarest of endowments. It is not nearly so common as the delight in music or in landscape painting.

Delight in poetry—one cannot too strongly insist—is delight in rhythm. It is the understanding of and feeling for the rhythm of the poem, not merely sympathy with the sentiment it expresses, or the story which it tells. Everything in the poem is subservient to the rhythm; or, at least, only finds its right expression as the rhythm is given its true value. The elocutionist too often rushes in with a complete want of sympathy with rhythm, and a very defective ear for it, and by mouthing and emphasis robs the poem of its proper magic. The cheated and disappointed ear listens in vain for the fairy music with which it knows so well the words are charged. It is curious that, whilst everyone understands what is meant by 'an ear for music,' 'an ear for rhythm,' is never even so much as heard of. I myself do no not know one tune from another, but I am often haunted by the lilt and cadence of a verse of poetry to which I

can assign no words. It seems to be commonly supposed that all that is necessary for the reading of poetry is to understand the poem intelligently, to emphasise the right words, and to mind the stops. But the difference may be as great between two readers of a poem as it is between two performers of a sonata of Beethoven; one of whom plays all the notes correctly, and thumps and tinkles at the pianos and fortes respectively, and another who gives himself up to the music, who forgets himself and all thought of making effects, and who so feels with the master and divines his thought that his personality is lost in the music which he renders and reflects. We may distinguish these two performers as the Elocutionist and the Rhapsodist.

One feels that it is very difficult to express one's meaning clearly about this. The word 'render,' still better the word 'reflect,' probably goes to the root of the matter. It means to 'give back,' to give again the poem as it lived in the poet's mind, to be the medium which receives his thought, as the

untroubled limpid lake amid the hills receives the image of the hillside town, with every tower and tree. Nothing can be more irritating and distressing to the listener than the intrusion, sometimes the violent and exaggerated intrusion, of an alien personality between the poet and himself. The true declaimer of a poem is, of course, the 'maker' of it—the making and rendering of poetry is, indeed, one art, the rarest and most lovely art of all. This is the art of the Rhapsodist, for which that of the Elocutionist is a sad and sorry substitute.

Nothing can be truer than the saying that it takes a poet to read poetry. Those who heard the late Lord Tennyson recite his poems describe his reading as 'a kind of glorious chant.' One would have given much to have heard him declaim, say, the 'Choric Song' of the 'Lotus Eaters.' One imagines his recital of such lines as

> The full juiced apple, waxing over mellow
> Drops in a silent autumn night;

or

> To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
> Its waters from the purple hill,

with the full value given to each syllable, and the whole of the words welded into an indissoluble harmony. To have heard the last chant of the gods 'beside their nectar,' 'looking over wasted lands,' must have been like listening to the sea. The last lines of all would have been like the falling of a great calm. Again, one thinks of Mr. Swinburne —alas, no longer with us—as an ideal Rhapsodist. It would have been a great thing to hear him recite 'Itylus.'

In our own day poets are few, reciters of poetry are many. Those who undertake such recitations should remember that their labour is in vain unless they have themselves something of the poet's knowledge, unless, in some measure, they know his art from the inside. Poetry, indeed, is not so much 'art' as 'nature.' A poem is not a manufacture, but a revelation. Like the poet himself, it is born, not made. It is 'the chance *birth* of some evening at an Ionian festival or morning amid the Sabine hills.' It can be truly shown to others only by an intuitive sympathy. If this is wanting, no number of mechanical

rules can take its place. The Rhapsodist is commonly confused with the Actor, but he is altogether a different person.

It is a commonplace to say that, in supreme poetry, no single word could be changed. There is much, indeed, which can fairly claim to be called poetry, which yet is verbose, wordy, which talks about things rather than shows them to you. There is also the poetry which is the very music of the world. The one younger English poet who can give us poetry of this kind is the author of 'A Shropshire Lad.' Words are powerless to express the 'poignant pleasure' (to quote the text once more) which this little volume gives to its true lovers. In Mr. Housman's lovely verses the words cannot conceivably be changed. Just as certainly there can be but one right way of reading them. The secret is, no doubt, Mr. Housman's, but an immense sympathy might perhaps come near it.

Oliver Wendell Holmes says somewhere that the words of a true poem 'have loved one another from the beginning of the world.' The saying comes very near to a definition of

the secret of rhythm. It is the appreciation of this fact which makes the essential difference between the Elocutionist and the Rhapsodist. To one the words are a heaped-up pile of separate coins or counters; to the other they live and grow together into a lovely whole. To the Elocutionist they are simply a lot of different words, to the Rhapsodist they form a unity. Take the first line of poetry that comes into one's head, as a 'rhythm test,' say this of Mr. Quiller Couch's :—

Leaves of the creeper redden and fall,

and see how many of those who try to say it show any sense of the subtle relationship and sympathy of the four chief words of the line! But to go back to Mr. Housman, I know of no poetry, ancient or modern, where the words so belong to each other as the 'Shropshire Lad.' Take, for example, the poem 'Bredon Hill.'

In summertime on Bredon

—the words sing themselves. Sad as the poem is, it is yet by sheer loveliness of

rhythm 'a happy noise to hear.' One thinks of some elocutionist making a strident declamation of that humming murmur. In this little book the pleasure to be obtained from rhythm may be found in perfection, in an absolute degree. People speak of it as almost unendurably sad; on myself it never makes this impression; the lovely mastery of English words brings a reconciliation into all its tragedies. Mr. W. B. Yeats, again, in such verse as

I will arise and go now and go to Innisfree,

knows how to make words join hands in some dancing game, and kiss and whisper and call to one another among the trees.

Rhythm is full of subtleties which the ordinary Elocutionist seems quite to miss. Take, for example, the curious and charming effect of the last line of every verse in Rossetti's 'Staff and Scrip':

For him the stream had never welled
In desert tracts malign
So sweet; nor had he ever felt
So faint in the sunshine
Of Palestine.

One can only describe it by saying that the first four lines advance in a troop, and that the fifth line meets and clashes with them, or that a swiftly moving tide suddenly rolls backward in the last line.

Fortunately, Elocutionists rarely choose really poetic poems for their experiments, and this is well, because the murder of poetry is to be classed with the cutting down of limes and mulberry trees, and with apostasy, heresy, sorcery, and all the sulphur-coloured crimes of a mediæval wizard.

'BESTIALISSIMA PAZZIA'

THE Editor has asked me to write on a subject on which I find it difficult to speak calmly, but I will try to do so. I am aware that my feeling on the subject of European militarism is not shared by many on whom personally I look with affection and respect. The literary work of both Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton, for instance, delights me, and with much of their teaching I am in the warmest agreement. Yet one is astonished to find Mr. Belloc writing such a sentence as this: 'Such men as Mr. Norman Angell' (the miserable pacifists) 'cannot understand how repulsive their propaganda is to men who have retained the European lineage and tradition.' I quote from memory, but I have got the hang of it. As to this, surely it is but necessary to mention the name of

Lionardo. Lionardo surely did not merely 'retain the European tradition.' He was himself the prophetic soul of Europe, dreaming upon things to come. The elements that have built up Europe, the opposing forces which have fought for Europe, whose struggle has been the history of Europe, were all found in him. He, the painter of Monna Lisa, the sculptor, the architect, the life-long experimenter in the problem of human flight, had also a profound knowledge of strategy and all military affairs. The fieriest of our modern fire-eaters could not dismiss him as a sentimental milksop. Yet his description of war is very concise. War, he says, is 'bestialissima pazzia,' 'most bestial madness.' No seventeenth century Quaker, no modern member of the Peace Society, could have put it better.

Mr. Chesterton again wrote recently in one of those Saturday articles, in which, oddly enough in the *Daily News*, he so often chants the praises of the military spirit, something like this (he was speaking against the anti-militarists): 'It is useless to argue

with people who are not touched at the thought of one of these lads' (a group of French conscripts) 'found shot dead somewhere in the Vosges, with a woollen comforter round his throat and a paper of his mother's lozenges in his pocket.' Personally, I am strongly in sympathy with two-thirds of Mr. Chesterton's programme. I will not particularise—the discerning reader can supply the omission. But when he talks like this, I feel moved to remonstrate. It is as though a priest of Juggernaut should invite us to be 'moved' and 'touched' at the sight of the mangled corpses of his idol's victims. For my own part, I do not intend to give way to maudlin sentimentalism (there is no sentimentalist like your militarist); I am not moved or touched; I am angry.

In a conversation during the South African war, I remember an ardent 'patriot' discoursing on the line taken by various well-known people with regard to the matter. He spoke of one particular literary man as being quite incapable of taking any reasonable view of the subject, and whose opinion about

it was without weight of any kind. 'The only thing that seems to strike him,' he remarked, with a pitying smile, and in a tone of lofty, high political wonder, 'is that it's such a pity for so many of the young men to be killed.' Yes, my dear fellow-guest of that long past dinner party, this is the only thing in the whole miserable business worth thinking about at all. It is a deluded 'patriotism' which imagines that it is serving its country by killing off the flower of that country's manhood.

Think of Europe: look down upon it in fancy as the storks and swallows see it flying South—its mountains and valleys, its noble rivers, its cities by cathedral towers, its fields and vineyards, its people speaking, with infinite and beautiful variation, some two or three great languages. They have at bottom no grudge against one another—no racial animosity which is not artificially manufactured and kept alive. Still less have they any hatred against the strange people of unknown lands, against Arabs or Japanese. Ah! hapless lads of Europe, Juanito, Beppo,

Fedka, it is you must pay the blood-tax. Think of them, uprooted from the vital labours of the vineyard and the field, from the honourable and necessary trades and crafts, the callings helpful and good for men, the Alsatian clock-maker from his cunning work with cogs and wheels, and moving figures and chiming numbered hours, the Bavarian wood-carver from his Cribs and Crucifixes, the Breton fisher lad from his nets and tackle, and the brave daring of the honest dangers of the sea in 'La Couronne de Marie' amid all the fleet of Mary's fishing boats, the Tuscan widow's son from his father's little farm and inn of 'Le Tre Pulzelle.' Herded together in barracks, infected with the diseases and the vices of towns, bringing these things back to their country homes, if they come back at all, bringing with them too the townsman's contempt for country work and homely, simple country things—'most bestial madness' indeed it is which demands such sacrifices as these.

There is a really terrible want of imagination displayed as to the real meaning of war by

many of its most ardent advocates, indeed, by people generally to whatever particular opinion they incline. We remember a lady telling us that 'being shot, after all, was a very easy death—it was something quite momentary.' Her mental picture evidently was of two rows of smart soldiers popping away at one another, in a friendly spirit for a moment or two, and here and there one or two falling from the ranks on either side. But war is the organisation of human misery on the grand scale—horror beyond the power of the imagination to conceive. It means the murder and mutilation of men, the suffering and degradation of women, the unchaining of disease, the trampling of the harvests of the earth, the poisoning of its waters and wells! It means men with parts of their bodies shot away, men bleeding to death, men with their noses and ears cut off by wandering savages, men dying of thirst in African deserts. W. G. Ward, the author of the 'Ideal,' of Tractarian days, was in the habit of asserting that the principle of religious persecution throughout its whole history had not caused

so much human suffering as is crowded into a single battlefield. If for 'battlefield' we say 'campaign,' this is probably true. Compared to the hideous mechanical butchery of of modern warfare, such mediæval horrors as the torture of witnesses and the burning of witches are minor and unimportant. We ourselves spare no pains to wipe out such old-world survivals as the slaughter of a few slaves to provide an escort for the King of Dahomey in his passage to the other world. They shock our white philanthropy. We strain and shudder at gnats, and swallow camels as though they were oysters of Marennes.

And why? Why is it, for instance, that the peasants of Tuscany and Sicily and Umbria are ground down by taxation, and the country is continually depleted of its real wealth? It is that Italy may become a commercial rival of Germany, a third-rate pinchbeck imitation Germany itself. This is the end of the dreams of Mazzini and the songs of Swinburne and Browning. United Italy, forsooth!

The late Sir Edward Burne-Jones, who was a European in the succession of Lionardo, in a drawing called 'Black-Archangel' (in the series founded on the names of flowers), sketched a growing wheat-field being trampled down by the hoofs of the horses of cavalry. It is indeed a sight to make black angels laugh. And it is purposeless, causeless, needless. The fair-haired contadini from the hills above Seina (described by a recent war correspondent), sent out to African deserts to have their noses and ears cut off, to bleed to death, to die of thirst, in the madness and the lust of war to commit most bestial atrocities themselves, have no grudge against the grave, stately Arabs, the dark-skinned men with the shaven heads and the white turbans and burnouses, they are sent to kill. They should be whistling behind the plough drawn by white oxen, in the Umbrian valleys, singing at their work in Tuscan vineyards. That would indeed be *Realpolitik*, that would be nation-making, Their present employment is 'most bestial madness.'

THE OUTDOOR LIFE

THE Countess Martenengo Cesaresco, in her charming volume on 'Outdoor Life in Greek and Roman Poets' (published by Messrs. Macmillan), refers to 'the ancient custom of carrying a wooden swallow from house to house, and asking for largess in honour of the return of the Spring.' Of this custom, which is as old as Homer, the Countess says: 'I do not know that there is an older piece of folk-lore on record which is still in current use.' On reading this, I remembered that I possessed an old book of travels which contained this swallow-song of Athenæus, still sung by Greek children from door to door. Here is a rendering which, as far as mere words go, gives the sense of this old song or something like it. (My travel book, by the

way, says that the children brought a living swallow) :

Come out, good folk,
The swallow is here ;
He brings good days
And the glad New Year.
Here at your door
He twitters and sings,
With the white breast
And the black wings.
Bring from the house
Raisins from your vine,
Honey-cake and almonds,
And a cup of wine.
Bring your best white bread,
With curds and cheese,
The swallow will feast
On a handful of peas.
If you content us,
We'll bid you good-day ;
If you deny us,
Here we will stay.
We'll break down the doors
With noise and with din,
And snatch the old woman
Who sits within.
If you will not give us
Your wine and your cake,
The little old woman
Is easy to take.
Open the door to the swallow,
To summer and all its joys ;
Open the door to the swallow,
We are not old men, but boys.

'Οὐ γὰρ γέροντές εἰμεν ἀλλά παιδία,' the song

says, and when the song was made the world had not grown wise or old.

It belongs to that far-off time when the people not only felt intensely, but were able to express, their joy in the world. There is no literature so great but that it has its roots in that time and joy. For instance, the Countess Cesaresco in this book reminds us of the origin of the word 'tragedy.' (Is there any romance in the world, by the way, so enthralling as Skeat?) It is the 'song of the goat singers,' the mummers dressed in goat-skins, or, perhaps, contending one against another for the prize of a goat, who, at certain sacred seasons of the year, sang their stories and ballads of heroes and gods from house to house. To the peasant of the Ancient World, the earth was human and living and peopled with spiritual presences and powers. The 'Metamorphoses' of Ovid are a collection of peasant traditions. The Countess Cesaresco writes most sympathetically of the dismay caused in the simple minds of the last *pagani* by the preaching of the Christian monks. I myself would gladly

spare a copper or two to light a candle at a shrine of St. Paulinus if I came across one in my wanderings anywhere—the wise old South Italian priest who strove to reconcile the old with the new. He was the first to set up pictures in churches. He tells a charming story of a countryman whose oxen were stolen, and who violently upbraided St. Felix of Nola for his negligence in guarding them. (In South Italy in the fourth century St. Felix was what the Madonna is to-day.) Paulinus says: 'St. Felix forgave the want of politeness for the abundance of faith, and he laughed with Our Lord over the injurious expressions addressed to him.' He also took care to see that the oxen returned to their owner's stalls.

The outdoor life as we know it in Northern lands is no idyll of Theocritus. Putting aside for the moment the English farm labourer, let us attend in spirit, say, a cattle-market somewhere in La Beauce, thronged with French peasant-proprietors. An extraordinary atmosphere of pure naturalism, not to say animalism, seems to pervade the scene.

We appear to be not far from Zola's 'La Terre.' Yet, again, one sees how normal and natural to men is this life of the open air that they lead. Their interest in their gains is keen enough, no doubt, but with no religious or poetic clothing, and no power or wish to express it, one feels that they have still all the old-world joy in the earth and her life, in Nature and her processes, in living in the open and seeing things grow. Go a journey with a party of peasant-proprietors in one of their slow trains anywhere about Berri or La Beauce, and see them playing with a pack of dirty cards, at intervals talking about their cattle and their crops, and taking great pinches of snuff, which first they place on the back of the right hand at the root of the first finger, and then raise to the nose and slowly inhale, and you will see how wholesome and contented is the life they lead.

The truth, no doubt, is that life in the open air is man's original state, the country his true home. Pent up in towns, in shops and offices, he is a prisoner and an exile.

Every man feels more or less the longing for his native Garden. Dante tells us:

> Lo sommo Ben, che solo a sè piace
> Fece l'uom buono, e a bene, e questo loco
> Diede per arra a lui d'eterna pace.
> Per sua diflalta qui dimora poco,
> Per sua diffalta in pianto e in affanno
> Cambio onesto riso e dolce gioco.
> —(Purg. xxviii., 91-96.)

In the Ancient World, in the far South, amid the labours of the vineyard and the field, sung of by the old poets, something of this *onesto riso e dolce gioco* was still to be found. In spite of the thorns and the thistles and the sweating brow, amid the harsher labours and the sterner climates of Northern lands, we believe that even in our own day it is not wholly gone. The lot of the modern English peasant, for instance, to one's first observation may seem a very pitiable one. Yet it, no doubt, has its compensations. I remember an old gentleman who used to say: 'We don't want high art—what we want is fine art. To be able to clip a hedge properly is fine art.' This old gentleman had many

plans and hobbies—a great favourite among them being a proposal to provide work for the people by levelling the Sussex Downs—but there was a great deal of wisdom in much that he said. The farm labourer is, indeed, in a sense, an artist—he has his own technical knowledge and skill. His pleasure and interest in his work is shown by his continual talking about it. He liberally returns the contempt of the townsman, who calls him ignorant, as, far from the garish shows and vulgarities of towns, he watches year by year those sights and sounds of Nature, those changes of the seasons, those ways of birds and beasts that have been seen age after age by the great poets and by all the generations of men.

There is no more delightful character than the amateur farmer, the amateur gardener, who farms and gardens for pure love of it, and counts the world well lost for his garden and his farm. One of the most attractive and lovable people it has ever been my lot to meet was a poor squire who had come home from administering a great district in India to

spend all his remaining days on the paternal acres which he loved. He never left them—he literally never spent a night away from home. Once a week he journeyed into a neighbouring town for a few hours, bringing home provisions in a sack. On all other days he worked all day in his own garden and his own fields. There was something venerable and patriarchal in his appearance, reminding one a little of Count Tolstoy. 'Hi, you fellow!' a smart stranger one day hailed him; 'whose place is this?' 'Colonel Mitford's.' 'Who's Colonel Mitford?' 'I'm Colonel Mitford.' His wife, too, cared for no company, and might be seen any summer morning, gathering green peas, in a coarse, brown holland apron. 'They're good peas, ain't they?' she would say. But one could not help loving the Squire. 'I so love this place,' was his refrain, 'every tree of it altogether, altogether.' One particular oak tree, on, it must be confessed, very insufficient grounds, he always called 'King Charles's Oak.' The word 'altogether,' which occurred continually in his conversation, he appeared to regard as

an all-comprehending, all reconciling formula, an ever-repeated wiping out of all that was unpleasant in the past, a justification for the extremest optimism, always disappointed, and yet perpetually renewed, as to the future. Good Radical as I am, I would yet like to write a chapter on the faith and hope and charity of country squires. Colonel Mitford's only glimpse of the far-off great world he had left was caught in the columns of the *Times*, which was spread out before him each morning on a kind of a lectern on the breakfast-table. 'Punitive expedition altogether,' he would murmur. His favourite exclamation naturally figured largely in the political speeches which he occasionally made to the villagers. 'Tax the foreigner altogether,' he would say. 'No discontent in Ireland altogether. Irish labourers best of friends—make money in England altogether; harvest done, go back to their own country, altogether, altogether.' The whole world was composed of good Tories, ranged contentedly each in his hierarchical rank, and all the best of good friends. The few exceptions it was

impossible to include in this happy scheme were never dwelt upon, but glided silently from thought and view. But such themes never long detained him from his celery trenches and his American blackberry vines. His study was full of young chickens, and eggs in process of being hatched. He delighted to show strangers round his market garden. One such, in my hearing, asked, somewhat brusquely, if it paid. He waved a deprecating hand. 'Don't think of that altogether; work for the people altogether; children picking strawberries, women gathering peas. Own carts go round—cater for the sergeants' wives. Like a change altogether; give 'em a change; one day radishes altogether, another day lettuce, next day tomatoes altogether. Altogether, altogether.' He looked on natural things with a real feeling for them. He revelled in the courting of the pairs of wrens and tom-tits about his place. He would become quite eloquent on the beauty of the bare branches of the winter trees. He bore no grudges. A new station-master would refuse him some long-established privilege.

'Another king who knew not Joseph altogether,' he would say. He lived among his own people and for them. I have known few people so kindly or so pleasant to talk to. Such lovers of the country and the open air are the salt of the earth.

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